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SPANISH DEFENSE POLICY  
UNDER THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT 1982-90

ULISES J. SOTO

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**Ulises J. Soto**

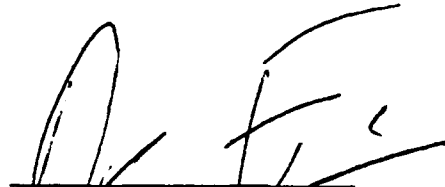
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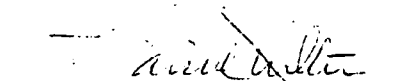


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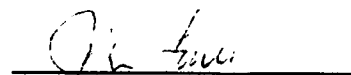
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Chairman



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John Lovell, Ph.D

## **DEDICATION**

To my father, who taught me pride in my heritage and the love of things Spanish.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some very special people that helped to make this thesis possible.

First, I would like to thank the professors of my thesis committee, who enthusiastically took the time from their already overburdened schedule to wade through this ponderous document. Their comments and insights proved invaluable in tying all the loose ends and in finally completing this project. I especially would like to cite the assistance of my thesis chairman, Professor Furniss. Despite his constant struggle to avoid being overwhelmed by his duties and responsibilities, he has always been willing to drop everything to help me or any other student.

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## INTRODUCTION

Spain has often been derided for her ambiguous and often contradictory form of participation in Western defense. Spain, for example, is in NATO, but refuses to join its "integrated military structure"; she has urged the strengthening of Europe's defenses, while simultaneously forcing the removal from her territories of a valuable wing of U.S. F-16 aircraft; as a member of both NATO and the West European Union (WEU), she has accepted the Alliance's nuclear policies, but has refused to allow nuclear weapons on her territory. These actions belie the fact that Spain does provide a valuable contribution to Western security, and is eager to participate further, given the right conditions. Critics fail to realize that a complex web of historical and domestic political factors have fixed the Spanish government's parameters in security policy and have determined the nature of her participation in Western defense.

Spanish history since the end of the Bourbon Monarchy has been marked by the struggle to create a viable constitutional order that could represent the interests of the major classes and interests in society. This historical process is not unique in European history, but in Spain it took longer and eventually required a bloody civil war and almost forty years of dictatorship to create the conditions necessary to arrive at a political consensus epitomized by the Constitution of 1978. These internal political struggles diverted Spain's attention from European affairs for almost a century and a half. One fortunate consequence was her official

neutrality during the two world wars, but Franco's close ties with the Axis powers during World War II left Spain shunned and excluded from the postwar reconstruction period, so instrumental in cementing the Atlantic Alliance and in laying the basis for European integration. So since Franco's time, reacceptance into Europe and reacceptance *as* a European country has been, not only a popular aspiration, but the primary foreign policy objective of Spanish governments.

The domestic political conflicts, the tradition of neutrality and the Francoist inheritance have colored Spanish perceptions in defense matters. Since the nineteenth century, defense policy (apart from various colonial wars) has been focused inward, on maintaining domestic order and on safeguarding or challenging existing political arrangements. The weakness of the political institutions and the heightened ideological conflicts made the military the key to political change (or lack of it) and made defense policy an essential component of domestic politics. Therefore in Spain, defense policy formulation has been more influenced by the domestic political environment than by external factors. Thus when General Franco signed the bases agreement with the United States in 1953, linking Spain for the first time in the Western security structure, the aim was not to enhance Spain's defenses but to gain desperately needed economic assistance and international recognition for the regime. Thirty years later, Spain would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for similar political objectives: primarily to ease Spain's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), but just as critically, to help depoliticize and modernize the military so that they could no

longer threaten the political system. In both cases long-developed domestic views about Spain's international role were overturned for more important international and domestic political objectives; and in both cases the nation's defense arrangements became a tool to secure those ends.

Yet whereas Franco's dictatorship could implement the 1953 Basos agreement with impunity, the NATO decision within the new democratic framework unleashed an enormous debate on Spain's defense arrangements and her role in the international order. Felipe González led his party, the Socialist and Worker's Party of Spain (PSOE), to a landslide victory in 1982, in part by tapping into the strong isolationist and neutralist sentiments of most Spaniards with his anti-NATO campaign platform. González campaigned to bring the NATO issue to a referendum, in which the government would advocate Spain's withdrawal from the alliance. But soon after reaching office, if not before, it became apparent that leaving NATO would damage the prospects for achieving the Spanish governments' two most important goals since the death of Franco: Spain's reintegration into Western Europe and the final consolidation of the new democratic system through the removal of the military as the final arbiter of domestic politics. Like his predecessors, González realized that his defense policy would have to be amended to achieve broader domestic and international political goals; like his predecessors, he recognized the role defense policy could play in securing those objectives.

The aim of this thesis is therefore straightforward. It seeks to show the primacy of domestic politics in the formulation of the PSOE's defense policy. Defense policy under the current regime has been decided, not by mere security requirements, but by the interaction of three often conflicting tensions: the desire and need to rejoin Europe as a meaningful player politically, economically, and militarily; the need to secure the democracy by finally incorporating the military into the new constitutional order; and the more difficult task of remaining responsive to a party and constituency conditioned by Spain's unique history. By necessity, the resulting policy has had to be one of compromise, and it is the process of achieving this domestic consensus that has given Spanish defense policy its ambiguous, contradictory, and often confusing appearance.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One, in effect, "sets the stage" by examining the state of the military establishment upon Franco's death and by discussing how the military reforms during the transition period to democracy (1975-82) eased the way for the Socialist's defense reorganization plans. It will also delve into the social and historical factors that would make NATO membership and security policy such a controversial domestic political issue.

Chapter Two is devoted to the most intense and bitter political debate of the young democracy's history -- the NATO question. The objective here is to trace the course of the Socialist President's "Pauline conversion" and the NATO referendum campaign. This chapter will show that the Socialist government's main international and domestic goals (i.e., entry into the EEC, control of Gibraltar,

reforming the military, and revamping Spanish industry) were best served by remaining in the Alliance, and that this fact was not lost on a politician as astute or pragmatic as Felipe González. The challenge then became arriving at a compromise that would meet the need to remain in the Atlantic Alliance yet maintain the electoral pledge of a referendum to a populace ready to reject NATO membership.

Chapter Three is a discussion of the modernization and reorganization program of the armed forces under the Socialist government. The intention here is show how the PSOE has successfully managed to establish firm civilian dominance over the military and how the military has been reoriented toward its external defense missions. The modernization program has also served to stimulate Spanish industries, particularly through collaboration and coordination with Spain's NATO and other European partners. The overall objective, however, remained focused on basic domestic issues: the depoliticization of the military and the alignment of Spanish society with West European norms.

Chapter Four will essentially focus on the U.S. bases negotiations and on Spain's contribution to the collective defense. These two areas were chosen because they provide more poignant examples of how domestic politics has affected the development of defense policy. In the first case, González needed, during a period of economic and political distress, to secure the withdrawal of the American F-16 squadron from Torrejón de Ardoz. Despite its impact on Spanish and Alliance defenses, the withdrawal was seen as essential to comply with the

NATO Referendum and boost the government's declining popularity. In the case of Spanish participation in West European defense organizations, the González government has labored to develop a form of participation that allows Spain to make a substantial contribution to the European defense community while maintaining at least the letter of NATO Referendum conditions.

Chapter Five is in two sections. Section one will sum up the conclusions of the thesis. The second section will briefly suggest future directions in Spanish defense policy, especially in light of the growing debate over military conscription and the dramatic relaxation of East-West tensions.

Finally, some may question the relevancy of this thesis in the "post Cold-War" world. With NATO transforming itself into a more political, less military alliance, what significance is Spain's defense structure? Yet as the Persian Gulf Crisis has shown, the demise of the Soviet threat has not increased the prospects for international peace. Regardless of how the present Gulf Crisis is resolved, the Middle East will remain a danger to the peace and stability of the industrialized world. The greatest potential threat to Europe appears then to come not from the east, but from the south. This menace need not arrive from outright aggression, but from the now common result of political instability and conflict: refugees and terrorism. Spain is particularly vulnerable and sensitive to the events in this region. Not only does she practically touch North Africa, but she has deep historical and cultural ties with the Arab and Moslem world. Now more than ever,

a clear understanding of Spanish perceptions, capabilities, and intentions, in the security arena are needed. It is toward this goal that the thesis is directed.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

The Socialist government under Felipe González is given the credit for restructuring the armed forces and removing them as the power broker in Spanish politics. As this chapter will hopefully show, the PSOE challenges in reforming the military and reorienting the Spanish defense structure were formidable.

Nevertheless, the later success of the Socialists was only made possible by the reforms accomplished during the transition period to democracy (1975-1982) and the lessons learned by both the civilian and the military leadership from the failed coup of the 23rd of February, 1981.

### **The Francoist Legacy**

A nation's defense structures and security policies should be closely aligned to a coherent external threat analysis, but this has not often been the case in Spain. Since the final collapse of the absolute monarchy in 1833, the Spanish military has spent more time and energy interfering in its country's politics than in defending Spain or its possessions from external challengers. This process culminated in the military insurrection that toppled the Second Republic during the Civil War and the establishment of the *dictadura* of General Francisco Franco that lasted for 36 years; but even this was a new twist to an old story. In the nineteenth century generals frequently rose up against the government; they failed to support the King in 1931; and they took the lead in overthrowing the Second



Republic. Franco, however, managed to acquire the loyalty of the armed forces and transform them into the strongest pillar of support for his regime.

Franco gained the allegiance of the military by enhancing their status and stake in the new political order. He restored the Army to its self-appointed position as the guardian of the nation's values. He gave them jurisdiction over crimes that threatened the established political system and he gave them prestigious and often lucrative positions in the government, the bureaucracy, the *Cortes*, and in the major state enterprises such as SEAT, Telefónica, and the INI (National Industrial Institute). The Civil War also served to enhance institutional loyalty by eliminating leftist and liberal factions in the military. The officer corps after the Civil War consisted of the most conservative elements of the Republican Army (those who had rebelled with Franco) and those who had joined out of ideological conviction (mainly Carlists and Falangists). It was this generation of officers that by Franco's death in 1975 comprised the senior leadership of the armed forces.

Franco did not, however, purchase the military's allegiance by granting them decent equipment or good wages. Spain's military budget was surprisingly low for a regime classified as a military dictatorship. For the decade 1962-72 the defense budget averaged 15.9 percent of total state expenditures; it was 13 percent in 1973 and reached almost 20 percent in 1975. As a percentage of the gross national product (GNP) this was much lower than in most other West European countries: 1.8 percent in 1975 compared with 2.8 percent in West Germany and

Holland, 3.1 percent in France, and 3.8 percent in Greece.<sup>1</sup> Out of this meager budget an extraordinary amount was going merely to pay for salaries and other personnel costs. In 1966, for example, only 6.5 percent of the army's budget was spent on new equipment, leaving 82 percent devoted to personnel; by 1975 this figure had only dropped slightly.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the armed forces consistently lagged behind their Western counterparts in up-to-date or even adequate weaponry.

The excessive personnel costs did not mean that officers were receiving high or even acceptable salaries. Military wages were so low that many officers were forced to "moonlight" to make ends meet. The practice, termed *pluriempleo*, was illegal, but the government readily turned a blind eye. What made the situation tolerable was the wide range of social services, in health, education, housing, and specialty stores, made exclusively available for the military. These services and benefits not only increased an officer's sense of belonging to a privileged class, but it also increased his dependence on the regime. Unfortunately, it also served to alienate the officer from a civilian society that since the 1950s had rapidly been transformed by the accelerated pace of

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<sup>1</sup>Adrian Shubert, "The Military Threat to Spanish Democracy: A Historical Perspective," *Armed Forces and Society* 10 (Summer 1984): 534.

<sup>2</sup>David Gilmour, *The Transformation of Spain* (New York: Quartet Books, 1985), 231; As a comparison, in the period 1976-78 personnel costs consumed 43.3 percent in West Germany, 35.4 percent in France, and 33.9 percent in Italy. Schubert, "The Military Threat," 534.

industrialization and urbanization. Hence, the gulf between the military and society was growing throughout the Franco period.<sup>3</sup>

The true cause of the heavy personnel expenditures was the excess of officers. This was not a new problem in Spanish history, it had been endemic since the nineteenth century. Indeed, a major factor for the military's disaffection from the Second Republic, was the effort of the Republican government to cut the bloated officer corps. The Civil War, Franco's political patronage, and a cumbersome seniority system for promotions, had now made the problem even worse. By 1980, there were over 400 generals in active service, in an army which contained only 3 divisions and 28 brigades; the Air Force, which was (and still is) considered the most efficient service, had 1 general and 250 other officers for each of its modern combat aircraft; and the average age of Spanish officers was the highest in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Despite the cost and inefficiency of this organization, Franco was unwilling to make more than minor alterations to the force structure. Cognizant of the lessons of the thirties and aware of the role the armed forces played in safeguarding his regime, he was unwilling to pursue any policy that

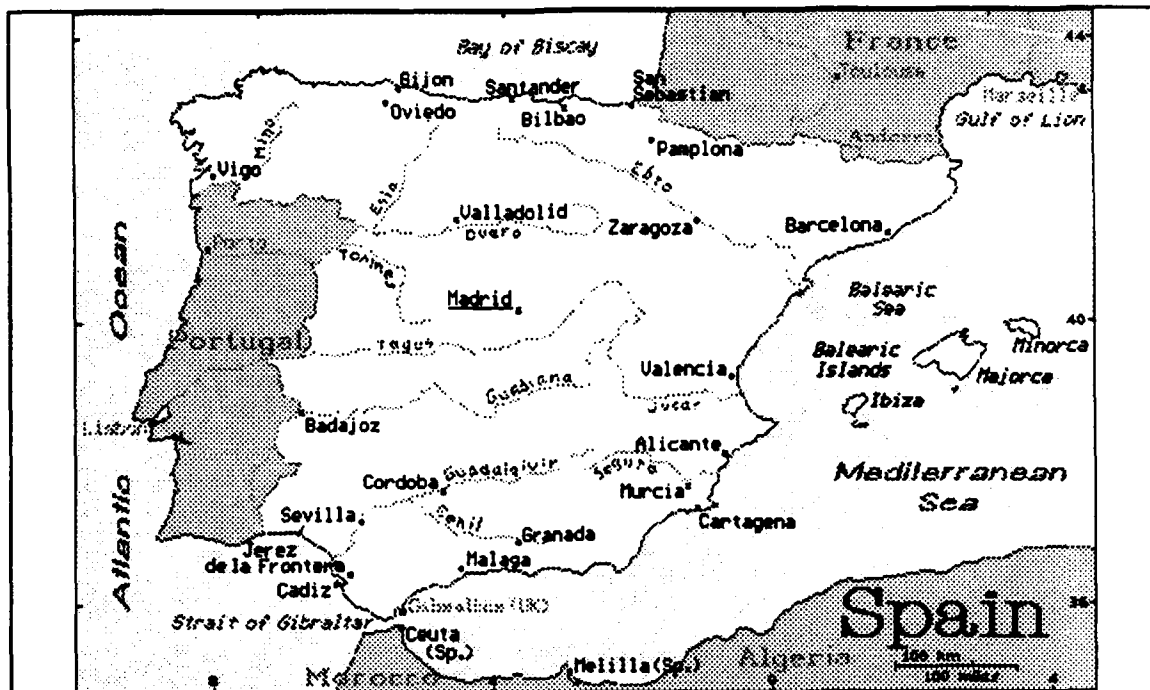
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<sup>3</sup>The military's alienation was further aggravated by the high rate of "self-recruitment." A sociological survey in the sixties reported that three quarters of the officer cadets were sons of officers and that fifty percent went on to marry the daughters of other officers. In effect, most officers were raised and educated within the bosom of the institution. Paul Preston, "Fear of Freedom: the Spanish Army after Franco," *Spain, Conditional Democracy*, ed. Christopher Abel and Nissa Torrents (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 165.

<sup>4</sup>Gilmour, *The Transformation*, 233; Schubert, "the Military Threat," 534.

might destabilize or internally divide the officer corps, or damage the career interest of those Civil War veterans that formed the ideological bulwark of his regime.

Besides the structural defects within the ranks, it was dangerously evident that the disposition and composition of units within the Spanish territories did not correlate with even the most accepted analysis of Spanish external defense requirements. Threats to Spain from the North, from the French border have never been taken seriously. Spain has been at peace with France for well over a century, and the Soviets (Franco's anti-communist rhetoric notwithstanding) are too far away and have never threatened Spain. The Pyrenees, in any event, still constitutes a formidable obstacle to any potential invader. It is historically from the South, from the Magreb, where danger, threats, and actual invasion have come, and it is here where Spanish security anxieties have been perennially focused. This uneasiness toward the South, often termed "the Almanzor Syndrome," is reinforced by the geographic positioning of Spanish territories off the Moroccan coast. The Balearic and Canary islands form inherent parts of the Spanish nation and Spain tenaciously clings to two enclaves on the Northern Moroccan coast, Ceuta and Melilla. Spain has owned Ceuta and Melilla for over four centuries (long before Morocco even existed) and they have long been governed as integral parts of Spain. This has not, stopped King Hassan of Morocco from asserting his claims, backed by other Magreb countries. Even Algeria, at times, has supported a movement fighting for the independence of the Canary Islands. The fear of the loss of these territories by coercion or outright aggression



**Figure 1: Map of Spain showing the locations of Ceuta and Melilla**

has been reinforced by King Hassan's famous "Green March" in 1975 and has continued to be the primary focus of Spanish security concerns.

Despite these threat scenarios and Spain's position as a peninsula, the Navy was largely neglected during the Franco period. From the period 1940-1977, the Army's share of the defense budget averaged 60.7 percent, while the Navy's slice exceeded 20 percent only after 1972.<sup>5</sup> The source of this disparity was Franco's conviction that the primary threat to Spain came not from the outside, but from within Spain. It is not surprising after fighting a civil war and a lingering guerrilla campaign that lasted until 1951, that the Army's deployment of forces

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<sup>5</sup>José Antonio Olmeda Gómez, "The Armed Forces in the Francoist Political System," *Armed Forces and Society in Spain, Past and Present*, ed. Rafael Bañón Martínez and Thomas M. Baker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 284-285.

would be more appropriate to an army of occupation, but the arrangements were confirmed and consolidated after 1965. The Army was thereafter organized into two major groupings. The first, the *Fuerzas de Intervención Inmediata* (FII) were designed to be a mobile strategic reserve force, consisting of three divisions (one armored, one mechanized, and one motorized) and four brigades (a parachute, an air-transportable, a cavalry and an artillery brigade). Their stated mission was to defend the Pyrenean and southern frontiers, but their stationing around key urban and industrial centers attested to their more internal focus. The Army's best trained and best equipped divisions, the "Brunete" Armored Division and the Parachute Brigade, for example, garrisoned the capital. The FII was superimposed over a territorial defense structure called the *Fuerzas de Defensa Operativa del Territorio* (FDOT). The FDOT were composed of nine home-defense brigades (one per military region), one mobile infantry brigade, two mountain divisions, and the Spanish Legion garrisons on the off-shore territories. Apart from the mountain divisions and the Legion, the FDOT were directly under the command of the nine military region commanders, and given their perennial poor readiness state, were incapable of fighting anything other than internal disturbances or civil unrest.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the armed forces that King Juan Carlos I inherited upon the death of Franco in 1975 were underequipped, underpaid, overmanned, inefficient, and with

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<sup>6</sup>Diego A. Ruíz Palmer, Spain's Security Policy and the Army in the 1990s," *Parameters* 20 (June 1990): 92.

a political outlook that generally ranged from conservative to reactionary. Furthermore, its territorial disposition simplified the possibility of reinterference in the political process if "the nation" or the institution were ever perceived to be in danger. It was apparent to the advocates of democratic reform that the restoration of a democratic constitutional government could succeed only if accompanied by a true restructuring of the military.

### **Transition and Reform**

Given all the factors mentioned, it appeared highly problematic that the military would acquiesce to the dismantling of the Francoist system. Yet within the course of forty months, not only had the Francoist system been dismantled and a new democratic constitution been promulgated, but key measures were enacted that would build the foundation for the total reorientation and modernization of the Spanish armed forces under the subsequent Socialist government.

Throughout this process two major factors were working to the reformists' advantage. Foremost was the fact that the military (with the Army being the primary element) was far from united. The accumulated structural problems, the slow erosion of the Franco regime in its last few years, the rise of separatist terrorism, and the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal in 1974, all combined to split officers along generational and professional lines. Younger officers, not belonging to the Civil War generation, and those in the more technical services,

were more inclined to favor a liberalization of the regime and the promotion of greater professionalism in the service. In 1974 a group of young officers in Barcelona formed the Democratic Military Union (UMD) to promote democratic ideals within the army. The leaders of the movement were soon arrested, court-martialed, and jailed. The organization never numbered more than a couple of hundred; regardless, it was widely believed to have garnered the sympathies of many younger officers.

Even at the top echelons, the military leadership was splintered. A minority favored a more professional, less politicized role for the armed forces, similar to that of other West European armies. The leader of this faction was Lt. Gen. Manuel Díez Alegría. As Chief of the Army General Staff in 1974, Díez was removed from his position after attempting to propose legislation in the *Cortes* that would have created a single ministry for defense affairs. Nevertheless, in 1976 the King appointed one of Díez's associates, Lt. Gen. Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, as Chief of the Army Staff to lead the Army during the transition. The lack of unity between the services and especially within the army prevented the consolidation of any broad based military opposition to the government's reformist policies.

The greatest credit for the success of the transition must still go to the King. Besides being the primary force in the reform movement, the King had both the formal and the informal ties with the military necessary to ensure the transition's survival. As head-of-state, commander-in-chief, and Franco's



designated successor, the King had lawful authority (and until 1978 sworn oaths of loyalty) over the armed forces. More useful were the long ties of friendship he had cultivated with many in the military hierarchy. He had been groomed and educated in all three military academies; he understood the values and attitudes of the officer corps. Throughout the transition he could rely on their personal respect and friendship to ensure the acceptance of unpopular reform measures. The King also proved a keen adviser to the government on the limits of military tolerance. With the King's efforts and influence, and the shrewd negotiating ability of Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez, essential political and military reform measures were successfully implemented often over the vehement objections of key sectors in the armed forces.

The immediate objectives of the Suárez government in 1976 were threefold: first, was to subordinate the armed forces to civilian control and induce them to accept the movement toward a democratic order; second was to modernize the military's institutions and procedures; third was to provide them the equipment and the resources to fulfill their designated function. Of the three, the first was the most challenging and dangerous task to accomplish. Suárez attempted to accomplish his goals by steering a conciliatory course toward the military. In a famous meeting with the military's leadership in 1976, he presented his political reform proposals to them for their "patriotic support." They reluctantly agreed to it in return for promises that the new political arrangements be "contained in the institutional order and its legitimate development" and that the

Communist Party not be legalized.<sup>7</sup> Suárez could meet the first condition but he could not fulfill the second. The political objectives of creating a democratic system could not be reconciled with the desires of the extreme right, called "ultras" or "*duros*," dominating the senior ranks of the military, particularly in the Army. It became immediately evident with the passing in November 1976 of the Law of Political Reform through the still Francoist *Cortes*; the military representatives provided a good part of the negative votes. Only the combined efforts of Gutiérrez Mellado, the moderates recently appointed to key posts, and the reassurances of the King, permitted the execution of the spate of political and military reforms in the next few years.

Of major importance was the creation in February 1977 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JUJEM) under a unified Ministry of Defense, replacing the previous three separate service ministries. It was followed by restrictions on servicemen from participating in political parties, joining trade unions, or expressing their political views in public. In 1978 the Standing General Orders of the Army were revised for the first time since the eighteenth century. It relieved soldiers of their personal service to the King, and exempted them from executing orders violating the newly enacted constitution or international law. Of particular significance for the future, was the Reform of the Code of Military Justice. Passed in late 1978, but not fully implemented until 1980, it restricted military jurisdiction to purely

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<sup>7</sup>Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (New York: Methuen Books, 1986), 97.

military crimes. It also provided greater procedural safeguards for defendants in military courts, including the right of appeal to the highest civilian court (a stipulation that would later enable the government to appeal the light sentences handed down to the military conspirators of the coup attempt of the 23rd of February 1981).

Although these measures were successful in limiting the military's traditional prerogatives and in establishing the legal basis for civilian control, it did not alter the fact that Suárez and Gutiérrez were still obliged to court military opinion out of fear of provoking a confrontation. The government bowed to military pressure by not reinstating the UMD officers; it was forced to dilute or eliminate key legislation that would have significantly addressed the issues of reduction in retirement ages, a merit promotion system, and the professional enhancement of personnel; and it failed to reorganize the armed forces toward its strategic functions -- army units still held their *cordon sanitaire* around the capital and other key cities. The military threat also provided a more direct incentive to increase expenditures on technological modernization and wages. Between 1977 and 1979, for instance, expenditures on new equipment increased from 15.9 percent to 20 percent in the Army and from 35.8 percent to 40 percent in the Navy.<sup>8</sup> The Suárez government's biggest mistake in its approach however, was to

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<sup>8</sup>Carolyn P. Boyd and James M. Boyden, "The Armed Forces and the Transition to Democracy in Spain," in *Politics and Change in Spain*, ed. Thomas D. Lancaster and Gary Prevost (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1985), 104.

tolerate the growing breaches in discipline among the more intransigent elements in the Army.

Despite the government's efforts not to offend their susceptibilities while carrying out the military reforms, it proved impossible to prevent political and institutional reforms from arousing discontent within military circles. The intensification of the Basque separatist terror campaign against the military and the implementation of policies, traditionally anathema to the military, such as the legalization of the Communist Party, and the embodiment of the principles of regional autonomy, invited an eventual reaction among the hardliners. In September 1977 "ultra" generals met at Játiva and called for the establishment of a government of national salvation, but the government did practically nothing to punish this mutinous meeting. The first direct conspiracy was uncovered in November 1978. "Operation Galaxia" (called for the Madrid café in which it was planned) was led by a Civil Guard officer, Lt. Col. Antonio Tejero Molina. It envisaged the capture of the cabinet to prevent the adoption of the new constitution. The government once again chose to dismiss the plot as a "café conversation between *cuatro locos* (four crazies)."<sup>9</sup> The plotters were only lightly punished and Tejero and his associates were back on active duty by July 1980.

The deteriorating political situation (continuing terrorism, popular discontent with the government, regional unrest, factionalism within Suárez's ruling UCD party), finally forced Suárez's resignation. The ensuing political crisis

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<sup>9</sup>Tbid., 110.

provided the extreme right with the opportunity to justify the only attempted coup against the new constitutional order. Again Tejero resurfaced to seize the Parliament building and capture the government's leaders during an investiture session of the *Cortes*. The conspirators hoped the nine regional Captain-Generals would join the action, but only the Captain-General of Valencia, Milans del Bosch, declared martial law and occupied the city. The King categorically refused to accept the action and worked feverishly to rally key commanders around him. Unable to gain the support among the rest of the armed forces, the leaders of the coup surrendered within twenty-four hours.

The attempted coup of the 23rd of February had enormous repercussions for the political process in Spain and the military's future. Politically, the coup reinvigorated Spanish politics and reaffirmed public support for constitutional government. On 27 February 1981, 1.4 million people marched through Madrid in support of democracy. But the continued conciliatory tone toward the military, the delay in bringing the conspirators to trial, the less than severe sentences that were finally meted out to the plotters, combined with a poor economy and an unabated terrorist campaign hastened the collapse of the UCD government and increased the electoral attractiveness of the Socialist Party. Militarily, the coup at least served, as one diplomat stated, to help "smoke out the most reactionary elements" in the military.<sup>10</sup> The repudiation of a return to authoritarian government expressed in the days after the coup and in the elections of 1982 provided even a

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<sup>10</sup>*New York Times*, 22 July 1989.

greater service. It was a clear signal to the *militares* that their "eternal Spain" no longer existed.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, the lessons of 1981 were not absorbed quick enough among the recalcitrant factions in the military. In October 1982, the government discovered yet another plot masterminded by Milans del Bosch (from his jail cell) and scheduled to be executed on the eve of the elections of 27 October 1982. This final act of military treachery finally convinced the UCD government to decree in its last days, the elimination of the strict seniority rule on promotions in the armed forces and the establishment of promotions based on merit.

Yet by far the most important result (for this study) of the attempted coup, was the decision of Suárez's successor, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, to bring Spain into NATO. NATO membership had been on the UCD electoral platform in 1977 and 1979, but Suárez aware of its controversiality and needing to keep a governing consensus in the fragile political system continued to postpone entry. Suárez recognized that such a move would fly against popular opinion and could not "be solved by one's party will, whatever its majority in parliament"; instead it would require "a national debate," and it would take time.<sup>12</sup> Calvo Sotelo, a long time

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<sup>11</sup>A survey conducted after the 1981 coup attempt showed only 9 percent of the people supported the coup; in October 1982 after the subsequent plot was discovered, only 5 percent professed their support. Rafael López Pintor, "The October 1982 General Election and the Evolution of the Spanish Party System," in *Spain at the Polls 1977, 1979, and 1982* ed. Howard R. Penniman and Eusebio Mujal-León (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 301.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Georges Minet, "Spanish and European Diplomacy at a Cross Roads," in Georges Minet, Jean Siotis, and Panos Tsakalyannis, *Spain, Greece and*

NATO supporter, saw it as the "occupational therapy" needed to cure the military from its praetorian mentality, and so pushed NATO membership through the *Cortes*. This act shattered the delicate foreign policy consensus that Suárez had striven to maintain among all the political parties and it initiated the debate that would dominate Spanish security concerns, and much of Spanish politics for the next five years.

### **The Spanish Environment**

Essential to an understanding of the controversy that would surround Spanish defense policy is the historical legacy of the Franco dictatorship and its unique association with the United States. Spain by virtue of its history, culture, and geography has always been an important part of Europe, but Spain before 1986 had not been a meaningful participant in European Affairs since at least the Napoleonic Wars. During the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, political turmoil, military dictatorships, and colonial disasters, diverted Spain's attention from European affairs. Franco's victory in the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship, with its connections to the Axis powers, brought further international isolation, especially from Europe. One result of these events was Spain's neutrality during both World Wars. As a consequence there has developed a strong neutralist sentiment among a broad current of Spanish public opinion. As a prominent Spaniard remarked:

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*Community Politics* (Sussex: University of Sussex, 1981), 14.

Spain, like Europe, has its share of pacifists and ecologists, but more importantly, it has a more conservative sector that remembers the advantages of neutrality.<sup>13</sup>

Her exclusion from the major events of the Second World War also meant that Spain did not develop that connection and relationship with either the United States or the other European powers that fostered the NATO alliance. She did not fight in the Allied cause; she was not liberated by Allied troops; she was not invited to participate in the postwar reconstruction of Europe under the Marshall Plan; she was not requested to join the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the West European Union (WEU), or any other European association. She also did not share the same threat perceptions. The Soviet Union had never been an adversary; during the Civil War she was even one of the few friends of the Second Republic. To the South, however, there remained an open wound: Gibraltar. Spain's identification with the Western Alliance will always remain difficult, as long as a premier NATO member, the United Kingdom, occupies what is perceived in Spain as the last colony subsisting on European soil.

Despite these differences, Spain has increasingly longed to fully rejoin the European community of nations since at least the last two decades of Franco's reign. Franco, having been rebuffed by Western Europe after the Second World War, sought to exploit the isolationist and neutralist sentiments among many Spaniards to protect his position from foreign criticism. He would often emphasize

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<sup>13</sup>Narcís Serra, "La Política Española de Defensa", *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 36 (October-December 1986): 185.



Spain's uniqueness and castigate Europe as the historical source of ideas threatening to Spain's traditional social order. Yet it was Franco himself that in many respects became the instigator of Spain's modernization and "europeanization." Economic crisis in the 1950s forced Franco to liberalize trade and banking laws, as well as to encourage labor migration, tourism, and foreign investment. The resulting infusion of foreign firms and tourists, and a new period of prosperity allowed many Spaniards the chance to travel and be exposed to other European countries and cultures. This exposure offered a direction to which their society could evolve and began Spain's transformation to a modern European state that continues until this day. It is essentially this tension between isolationism, neutrality, and europeanization in Spanish society and political thought that would lie at the essence of the NATO debate.

There is also another factor that influenced the polemics, and that makes Spain stand out from its West European neighbors -- latent anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism is deeply rooted in Spain for many reasons. Spaniards still have a collective memory of the humiliation of the Spanish-American War. Nor do many forget Washington's lack of support for the Republican government during the Spanish Civil War. But without doubt the major source of anti-Americanism comes from the presence of U.S. troops stationed in Spain since the conclusion of the 1953 U.S. Bases Agreement with the Franco regime.

The U.S. association to Franco would have an indelible effect on U.S.-Spanish relations and on Spain's future relationship with NATO. The historical

connections between the American bases, nuclear weapons, and the Franco period created, or at least reinforced, the predominantly negative attitude that Spaniards have toward the United States and NATO. To many Spaniards, the U.S. presence became more associated with the legitimization of the Franco regime than with European defense. An anti-American sentiment has therefore developed that is unmatched in Western Europe and that, more unusually, runs across the political spectrum. At one end, Spaniards assert that, the United States, through its need for bases, helped to sustain the Franco regime. As Felipe González declared in 1981,

America helped Europe to free itself from Fascism, and it not only did not help Spain but condemned it to dictatorship for many more years ... We have little for which to thank the United States, the last country with which we were at war with.<sup>14</sup>

At the other end is the belief that Spain has been exploited by the U.S. and that she has either, never received adequate compensation for the bases, or the costs have far outweighed the benefits. Conservative Foreign Minister Pérez Llorca said in the same year (1981), that the bilateral relationship was "clearly precarious and unsatisfactory ... tantamount to satellization."<sup>15</sup> Franco himself was a source of this brand of anti-Americanism. During renegotiation periods, Franco to raise the ante, would launch media campaigns claiming that Spain was getting too little in

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<sup>14</sup>Cited in Gregory F. Treverton, "Spain, the United States, and NATO: Strategic Facts and Political Realities," in *Spain's Entry into NATO*, ed. Federico G. Gil and Joseph S. Tulchin (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 126.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

return for bases essential to Western security. He would portray the previous agreements as unsatisfactory, unequal, and unjust. Thus it was made to appear that the U.S. was out to exploit Spain and that the rent and other assistance programs were ridiculously low.<sup>16</sup>

There were other events that marred the relationship. The 1963 treaty revisions permitted the entry of Polaris and later Poseidon submarines to the naval base at Rota and the storing of strategic nuclear weapons at Torrejón. The wisdom of these compromises was soon called into question in 1966, when an American Air Force bomber carrying several atomic bombs crashed into the Mediterranean, but not before it had dropped one of its bombs near the Spanish fishing village of Palomares. The incident received extensive Spanish press coverage and served to remind Spaniards of the dangers of American bases in Spain. The immediate Spanish government response was to prohibit the U.S. from flying strategic bombers loaded with nuclear weapons over Spain. The long-term consequence was the stipulation in the 1976 Treaty for the removal of nuclear weapons from Spanish soil, to include eliminating the presence of nuclear submarines from the Rota Naval Base.

There were other issues that goaded the Spanish public as well. Most Spaniards opposed the Reagan administration's policies in Central America, its more ideological stance in East-West relations, and felt insulted by Secretary of

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<sup>16</sup>Javier Rupérez, "Spain, the United States, and NATO: Political and Strategic Dilemmas," in *Spain, Studies in Political Security*, ed. Joyce Lasky Shub and Raymond Carr (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1985), 15.

State Haig's famous dismissal of the 1981 Coup attempt then underway as "an internal matter." So most Spaniards were reluctant to join an alliance that seemed to them as subservient to the United States. When Felipe González declared in 1976 that NATO "is nothing but a military superstructure implanted by Americans to guarantee the survival of the capitalist system," he was not merely espousing Socialist rhetoric, he was reflecting a common belief that NATO was created to serve United States' interests.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Carlos Robles Piquer, "Spain in NATO: An Unusual Kind of Participation," *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* 24 (Winter 1986-87): 326.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

It is important to understand the course of the NATO debate. It not only arrived at the terms that would dictate Spain's participation in NATO and would therefore affect future Socialist defense policies, but it embodied a much deeper process. The NATO controversy begun in 1981 and ending in 1986, was essentially a struggle to obtain a domestic social and political consensus on Spain's place in the world. The highest level of the PSOE leadership became convinced (despite their previous denials) that NATO participation was vital for Spain's international and domestic welfare, but they were beholden to a party and a populace conditioned by the anti-NATO sentiments described in the previous section. As this chapter will illustrate, the NATO referendum campaign provided the mechanism for arriving at a compromise. Consequently, strictly security considerations of NATO participation were from the beginning subordinated to, and even overwhelmed by, larger political considerations.

### **The First NATO Debate**

As mentioned earlier, Spain's association with NATO, from its inception, has been inextricably and consistently intertwined with political objectives. Suárez may have been reluctant to make the controversial plunge towards NATO, but as early as 1980 even his government suggested that Spain would enter the Alliance,

if progress on Spain's EEC application could be assured.<sup>1</sup> It was hoped that such a promise could sway community opinion against the main obstacle to Spain's entry -- French resistance. The ploy proved unsuccessful, but Calvo Sotelo, who replaced Adolfo Suárez as UCD party leader and President, represented the conservative wing of the UCD and was an avowed Atlanticist. He still saw NATO membership as a key to unlock EEC membership, but on a broader scope, he saw NATO membership as an essential component in the campaign to reintegrate Spain into Western Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The failed coup of 23 February 1981 brought forth a more immediate justification. Calvo Sotelo reasoned that NATO integration would assure the stability of Spanish democracy, by discouraging another military coup and assisting in the reform of the military. The NATO issue would also provide something around which his own disintegrating party could rally around, as the UCD was racked by factionalism and bickering. The UCD's argument before the *Cortes* thus rested on four major points: that NATO membership would ease entry into the EEC; that it would strengthen Spanish democracy; that it would be a natural extension to Spain's bilateral defense agreements with the United States; and that it would enhance Spain's security needs. The last two security points were

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<sup>1</sup>*El País*, 15 June 1980.

<sup>2</sup>"Spain's incorporation into NATO is linked to other factors conditioning our foreign policy," quoted in Preston and Smyth, *Spain, the EEC, and NATO*, 72; in Spanish parliamentary parlance, the leader of the government is officially known as "President of the Government" and is equivalent to Prime Minister.

secondary and were never emphasized by the UCD, presumably because the anti-NATO forces had no difficulty in refuting them.

The Socialists and their leftist allies emphatically opposed NATO membership and could easily counter these arguments. First, they questioned the link between EEC membership and NATO. Greece (before 1981) and Great Britain (prior to 1969) had been members of NATO, but not the EEC; Ireland is presently a member of the EEC but not NATO, while Norway is a member of NATO but not the EEC. The case of Spain's Iberian partner, Portugal, is even more apt. She was a founding member of NATO but her efforts to secure EEC membership had so far been blocked. As for the claim of protecting the democracy, the opponents of NATO could point to the examples of Portugal, Greece, and Turkey, where NATO had long tolerated military dictatorships.

It was the question of national security that really formed the heart of the PSOE's arguments. Fernando Morán's work, *Una Política Exterior Para España: Una Alternativa Socialista*, outlined the best and most influential exposition of the Socialist view. He argued that the issue of NATO had to be considered objectively, not ideologically. The PSOE is not opposed to NATO *per se*, but in Spanish participation, for NATO offered no appreciative advantages to Spain's national security and even seemed to increase the possibility of involvement in war. Russia was not seen as a direct menace to Spain, and even if there was a threat, the U.S. through bilateral defense arrangements was already committed to help. Spain's greatest security threat, on the other hand, was not under the

purview of NATO. NATO would not assist Spain in defending against any encroachment by Morocco on the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Spain however, would be committed to participate in any conflict in Central Europe, and would be added as a future nuclear target. Nor would NATO participation guarantee the return of Gibraltar, and how could Spain join an alliance that forced her to defend a power (Great Britain) which was occupying Spanish territory (Gibraltar)?<sup>3</sup>

If rejecting NATO participation, Morán and the Socialists also declined neutrality as a viable option. Unarmed neutrality was rejected as utopian and in Spain's position, dangerous. Non-aligned neutralism was repudiated as *Tercer Mundista* (Third Worldist). Spain did not belong culturally, historically, or politically to the Third World. Armed neutrality, as in the Swedish and Swiss models was also dismissed; it would involve at least doubling defense expenditures. In any event, it was highly doubtful that Spain's neutrality would be respected in a global conflict. Spain, unlike Sweden or Austria, had much greater immediate threats to her security, and she needed some kind of mutual security arrangement to deal with them. Therefore, the PSOE was adamant that its opposition to NATO did not imply a rejection of Spain's role in Western defense. The new Spanish democracy was inextricably linked to the West and would have to play its part in the defense of the shared values of pluralism and liberty. The

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<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed discourse by the man who served as González's Foreign Minister for the first three years of his term read, Fernando Morán, *Una Política Exterior Para España* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980).



ideal solution was to participate in a strictly European defense arrangement, but since that prospect was nonexistent, the Socialists (ironically, considering the popular distaste of the U.S. tie) supported renewing the military agreements with the U.S., while their anti-NATO ally, the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), more neutralist in its orientation, demanded unconditional removal of U.S. bases.<sup>4</sup>

Through the bilateral tie with the U.S., Spain would continue to participate in Western defense, while keeping a degree of autonomy not possible in NATO. The U.S. connection did not commit Spain to come to the United States' defense, and this arrangement was renewable, while NATO was an obligation of an indefinite nature. Moreover, NATO participation would undermine Spain's desire to assume a more influential role in Third World affairs, particularly in Latin America. Felipe González, as Vice President for the Socialist International (SI), was actively involved in molding European Socialist opinion on Central America, and on working for solutions to the region's problems.

Still in hindsight, what really provoked Felipe González's ire and vehement opposition was the political ramifications of the issue. The debates were occurring less than a year before the scheduled general elections in October 1982, and they were unfolding in the aftermath of a failed military coup that was having a decisive impact on the political scene. The repercussions over the UCD government's handling of the coup, combined with deteriorating economic

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<sup>4</sup>See the electoral program of the PCE in, Celestino del Arenal and Francisco Aldecoa, *España y La OTAN: Textos y Documentos*, (Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 1986), 388.

conditions and rising Basque terrorism were eroding public support for the government daily, and causing dissension within the UCD. The PSOE's main competitor on the left, the Communists, were also being ruptured by internal differences. It was already obvious in late 1981 that the Socialists were on the threshold of power, and any position it took on the NATO question would have an immediate impact on the looming elections.<sup>5</sup> In this light, it is not surprising that González urged that the issue be placed before the voters for decision, arguing that it was highly inappropriate for a weak government (with only a bare majority in seats) to decide an issue of such importance, especially in view of the coming elections and the general opposition of the Spanish public to NATO membership. In addition, the Socialists were incensed that the UCD had broken an implicit agreement on a political *consenso* in foreign policy that had existed since 1977.<sup>6</sup>

When his proposal for a referendum was rejected by the Calvo Sotelo government, González launched a massive mobilization campaign against NATO membership, and with successful results. Whereas in 1979 polls showed that 58 per cent of Spaniards had no definite view on the issue and only 15 per cent were mildly or strongly against NATO, by September 1981 those opposed to Spanish

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<sup>5</sup>For analysis of the UCD and PCE disintegration prior to the 1982 elections see, Eusebio Mujal-Leon, "Spanish Politics: Between the Old Regime and the New Majority" in *Spain at the Polls*, ed. Mujal-Leon and Penniman.

<sup>6</sup>Menet, Siotis, and Tsakalyannis, *Spain, Greece, and Community Politics*, 15.

entry had risen to 43 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this was not enough to deter the government. On October 28, 1981 the Congress of Deputies approved the application for entry by a vote of 185 to 146; On November 26, 1981, the Senate similarly approved the matter by a vote of 106 to 60.<sup>8</sup> Spain would formally become a member of NATO six months later. Felipe González's reaction was to the point:

If a simple parliamentary majority is all that is needed to take Spain into NATO, a simple parliamentary majority is all we shall need to take Spain out.<sup>9</sup>

González was angered that the UCD had now forced the NATO issue onto the future government's agenda, but he was too astute a politician not to realize that the issue had distinct political advantages. Felipe González was keenly sensitive to the deep feelings of isolationism, neutralism, and anti-Americanism that had deep roots among the Spanish people and that held sway over the greater part of his party's rank-and-file. In this pre-electoral period, any position other than being anti-NATO would have divided his party and meant fewer votes.<sup>10</sup> Besides, the

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<sup>7</sup>Patrick Camiller, "Spanish Socialism and the Atlantic Order," *The New Left Review* 156 (March/April 1986): 30.

<sup>8</sup>Emilio A. Rodriguez, "Atlanticism and Europeanism" in *Spain's Entry into NATO*, ed. Federico Gil and Joseph Tulchin (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 62.

<sup>9</sup>*The Economist*, 13 June 1981, 43.

<sup>10</sup>The deputy PSOE party chief and later Deputy President, Alfonso Guerra, calculated that an anti-NATO stance was worth two million votes. Richard Gillespie, *The Spanish Socialist Party: A History of Factionalism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 416.

Socialists, untainted by the Franco regime, with a long party history of honesty and struggle, led by a young charismatic leader, were seen as a new breed of politician. Ergo it "would have contradicted this image for Gonzalez and his party to have abandoned their position to NATO."<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the attempted coup of "23-F" had redemonstrated the necessity of pursuing policies that were acceptable to the military. For if the center-right UCD was threatened by the military, what would they do to a Socialist government? But the PSOE's anti-NATO stance actually placed it in the position of gaining the approval of the Army. Perhaps half of the officer corps, especially within the senior ranks, agreed with the PSOE view, mainly because they regarded the UCD's failure to negotiate concessions (such as for Gibraltar, or U.S. support for Morocco) in return for joining NATO as tantamount to national humiliation. NATO offered little to Spain's real strategic needs in the south, and joining NATO would require reorganization, modernization, and redeployment of forces toward a more external defense posture. Such a shift could come only at the expense of more senior officers. The Navy and Air Force, being more modern and having had greater contacts with their NATO counterparts, were more inclined toward NATO participation, but they were less influential.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Eusebio Mujal-Leon, "Foreign Policy of the Socialist Government," *The Politics of Democratic Spain*, ed. Stanley Payne (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1986), 218.

<sup>12</sup>This tacit agreement between many officers in the Army and the PSOE has not been fully explored. The best exposition is found in Paul Preston and Denis Smyth, *Spain, the EEC and NATO*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 52-55.

Still, Felipe González must have realized before the 1982 elections that he had to leave his options open for future NATO participation. He managed to push back the more "neutralist" left wing of his party into the background and establish an electoral platform that did not outright reject NATO membership, but promised only that the new Socialist government would "submit a referendum to determine Spain's permanence in NATO."<sup>13</sup> During the 1982 campaign, the Socialists gave no doubt to their anti-NATO stance with their "*de entrada, No*" slogan; the NATO issue was an effective issue against the more center parties. Nevertheless, González did not pledge completely (at least not on paper) to leave the Alliance. For if he was so against NATO membership a referendum would have been unnecessary, a "simple majority" would have sufficed to leave the Alliance.

The disintegration of both the UCD and the PCE in the 1982 electoral campaign expedited the landslide victory of the PSOE, allowing it to garner 48.4 per cent of the popular vote and 202 out of 305 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 26 seats more than an absolute majority.<sup>14</sup> The resounding PSOE victory cleared the way for a resolute government which did not have to compromise on their promised electoral program. The new PSOE government could now exit from NATO by "simple parliamentary majority" vote, or it could follow its electoral

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<sup>13</sup>The PSOE's 1982 electoral platform is in Del Arenal and Aldecoa, *España y La OTAN*, 312.

<sup>14</sup>Rafael López Pintor, "The October 1982 General Election and the Evolution of the Spanish Party System," *Spain at the Polls*, 295.

promise and immediately submit the question for referendum. There is no doubt that this would have resulted in a massive popular vote against membership, but since Felipe González's opposition to NATO was largely based on political considerations, it would be a different set of political considerations that would alter his plans.

### **The NATO Referendum Campaign**

A noted Spanish historian has pointed out the remarkable continuity in government policies evident in Spanish history, behind the appearance of often radical alterations. As he remarked, "the physical and social realities of the country in the long run have determined policy more than clashing ideologies."<sup>15</sup> The PSOE was no exception. Its stated foreign policy objectives, with its priority on entering the European Community, were consistent with the aims of the previous UCD governments, and even with the Franco regime:

1. Completing the negotiations for Spanish entry into the European Community;
2. hold a referendum on Spain's status in NATO, a corollary of which would be to seek the reduction of the US presence in Spain;
3. improve relations with Spain's European neighbor's particularly in reference to resolving the Gibraltar question;
4. improve relations in the Magreb, with special emphasis on the security of Ceuta and Melilla; and

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<sup>15</sup>Richard Herr. *An Historical Essay on Modern Spain*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 220.

5. promote political and economic ties with Latin America with an emphasis on a Spanish role in supporting democratization and peace, particularly in Central America.<sup>16</sup>

The González's government specific policy on NATO, in turn, had four elements:

1. A freeze on Spain's further incorporation into NATO's "integrated military structure";
2. a complete study of Spanish security requirements, especially in reference to structuring Spain's defenses to Western security;
3. providing a period of public education and debate on the issue; and
4. finally holding a "consultative" referendum on "taking Spain out of NATO."<sup>17</sup>

The exact date of the referendum was not specified; however, in the interim, the government promised to be a "faithful ally", fulfilling its commitments as long as it remained in the Alliance.<sup>18</sup> By announcing such a policy González apparently had no immediate intention to withdraw from NATO. González needed, either the time to decide his position on NATO, or if decided already, time to build an understanding within his party and an interval to construct public support for NATO. In response to those calling for an immediate withdrawal of Spain, González argued that it would have a destabilizing effect on the two-bloc system, especially in a period of heightened East-West tension. Furthermore, the Socialists

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<sup>16</sup>Rodriguez, "Atlanticism and Europeanism," 63.

<sup>17</sup>See, Narcís Serra, "Spain, NATO and Western Security," *Prospects for Security in the Mediterranean*, Adelphi Paper 229, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1988), 6; George Allin, "The Spanish NATO Dilemma," *Military Review*, 65 (January 1985): 62.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.

never promised immediate withdrawal, only a referendum. The new Defense Minister, Narcís Serra appreciated the difficulties of the situation:

Entering or not entering NATO is obviously not the same thing as leaving or not leaving. It is true that Spain's not entering would have meant nothing to NATO, but its leaving does mean something, because it is possible that Greece, Denmark, and so forth may say that, "if you leave here a few more of us may."<sup>19</sup>

The PSOE's stated opposition, after all, was on objective and not ideological terms. This now allowed Gonzalez an opening to stress the importance of an assessment period:

We have never been opposed to NATO. What we are against is Spain's joining NATO which is different ... we have made no ideological attack against the existence of NATO. From a defense and security point of view there is no need for Spain to join NATO. We will study the situation with maximum care and attention. We are in no hurry.<sup>20</sup>

Gonzalez's statement implied that if it could be proven that Spain's security interests could be enhanced by NATO membership, then by extension, his views could also change. Indeed, this was Gonzalez's own rationalization for his subsequent "Pauline" conversion. In 1986 when asked what led him to change his mind, he declared:

It was after coming to power and discovering a whole lot of things. For example, we found that Spain's independence in foreign policy was not curtailed [by NATO membership], but strengthened, and the country's credibility was not diminished but increased. The government's views on world issues are now more widely sought, particularly where matters of peace and security are concerned. Spain has become a part of the process of building European unity. That's why I consider it appalling if we were to

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>20</sup>Preston and Smyth, *Spain, the EEC and NATO*, 76.



leave the discussion table now, just when European peace and security are being debated.<sup>21</sup>

Apparently this "discovery" was already occurring as early as 1983 and was leading to growing differences between González, his more "neutralist" Foreign Minister Fernando Morán, and his old political crony (and now Vice President) Alfonso Guerra. In May 1983, González in a visit to Bonn, expressed "comprehension and solidarity" with NATO's decision to deploy 572 cruise and Pershing missiles in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe, in the absence of an accord on mutual missile reductions.<sup>22</sup> This statement unleashed a furor of protest in Spain. On 12 June 1983, 100,000 left-wing demonstrators took to the streets of Madrid to protest NATO's nuclear policies and the Spanish President's support for them. It was the first time that González was being abused publicly by left-wing groups, but it was certainly not going to be the last.

The same year was marked by an effort to improve relations with the United States. In an apparent friendly gesture, González opted to reequip the Spanish Air Force with American F-18A Fighters, rejecting European-made Tornado Fighters, whose manufacturers had fiercely fought for the contract (it could have also been a signal to the EC of González's displeasure with the stalled EEC entry negotiations). Spain also renewed the Spanish-U.S. agreements allowing the American use of air and naval bases in Spain for five more years. In

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<sup>21</sup>Anthony Gooch, "Surrealistic Referendum: Spain and NATO," *Government and Opposition* 21 (Summer 1986): 301.

<sup>22</sup>*El País*, 29 May 1983.

a visit to Washington in June 1983, González acknowledged Spain's "responsibility to be part of Western security" and advanced Spain's desire to integrate herself into West European economic and political structures, but he also shrewdly commented that, "we haven't felt very much solidarity from the West," referring to the stalled progress on Spain's admission to the EEC.<sup>23</sup>

In retrospect one can discern González's strategy. He was trying to use Spain's half-in/half-out NATO status to secure his primary foreign policy goal -- the accession of Spain into the European Community. He hoped by his advances to the United States to secure (from NATO's "big daddy") support for expediting the EC negotiations process, as well as establishing a rapport which would ease discussion of U.S. troop reductions in Spain. Similarly, his affirmation of solidarity with the Bonn government's decision to accept the missile deployments was aimed at garnering German support for EC entry. The linkage between NATO and the EEC had been denied by the Socialists prior to the 1982 elections, and it was still being denied by Foreign Minister Morán in 1984.<sup>24</sup> These denials, however, did not correlate with the actions or comments of either Felipe González or other the European heads of state.

Many political observers have cited his use of the threat of the referendum, in a "calculated ambiguous way" to break the stalemate of the EEC negotiations.

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>24</sup>"Joining the EEC does not oblige us to remain in the Alliance", Mujal-Leon, "Foreign Policy of the Socialist Government", 228.

González could easily point out that since Spaniards were against NATO but in favor of EEC membership, then being turned down by the EEC would guarantee Spanish withdrawal from NATO.<sup>25</sup> For example, on returning from Bonn in 1983, he hinted that the exact wording of the referendum proposal could depend upon the process of Common Market negotiations.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, this tactic could be a double edged sword. Many leaders (among them, Helmut Kohl, Bettino Craxi, Margaret Thatcher, and even Francois Mitterrand) managed to convey the message that, before Spain would be accepted into the Common Market, she would have to clarify her future role in NATO.<sup>27</sup> González's approach, however, did have success. In June 1983 West Germany advanced the "Stuttgart Formula" at a meeting of the European Council that proved crucial in resolving many of the objections to the further enlargement of the Community.<sup>28</sup>

Regardless of what leverage the referendum issue could provide, it is difficult to imagine that a pragmatic politician of González's caliber would have seriously contemplated withdrawing from NATO in view of the practical reasons for staying. Spanish foreign policy objectives -- entry into the EEC, the return of

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<sup>25</sup>Meir Serfarty, "Political Pragmatism in Spain," *Current History* 85 (November 1986): 380.

<sup>26</sup>Preston and Smyth, 78.

<sup>27</sup>Mujal Leon, "Foreign Policy of the Socialist Government," 228.

<sup>28</sup>The Council forged a deal on French demands for reform of the CAP and British insistence on budget discipline, in effect, Germany agreed to pay the cost of enlargement in return for France's agreement to lift its veto on Spanish candidacy. Glen Macdonald, "European Community Enlargement and the Evolution of French-Spanish Cooperation," *Spain's Entry into NATO*, 82.

Gibraltar, and increased security for Ceuta and Melilla -- were more attainable within NATO. As the Socialists pointed out in 1981, NATO membership did not guarantee return of Gibraltar, but it gave Spain a stronger bargaining position. Under the auspices of NATO, pressure could be applied on Britain to resolve the issue. Likewise, even though Ceuta and Melilla lie outside NATO's area of responsibility, King Hassan of Morocco would think twice about moving against a territory controlled by a NATO member. Additionally, Spain's development into a modern industrial society, with increased economic and commercial links to the United States, Japan, and Western Europe, would only make it inevitable, and logical, that she should shift her orientation away from the old neutralist or "Third World" viewpoint of the Franco era, and toward the more exclusive club of the economically advanced countries.<sup>29</sup>

The emphasis on modernizing Spain was one of the fundamental goals of the Socialist government. No where is this better evident than in the military reform program introduced under the leadership of Defense Minister Narcís Serra (and which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three). Although, as one may recall, the PSOE and the Army formed an anti-NATO agreement prior to the 1982 elections, once in power the Socialists were confronted with the same

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<sup>29</sup>The "bottom line" is that Spain today has more in common with the developed world than with Latin America or the rest of the less developed regions. Over three quarters of her trade is with the EC or the US. An excellent study of Spain's trade pattern and its effects on Spanish foreign policy can be found in Alfred Tovas, *Foreign Economic Relations of the European Community: The Impact of Spain and Portugal* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990).

problem -- how to reorient the military away from its traditional internal security role, to one of external defense. Toward this objective, the government established a modernization program to reduce the number of soldiers, retire or dismiss many in the bloated officer corps, establish promotion by merit rather than seniority, update equipment, and above all, strengthen civilian leadership of the military. The ultimate goal was to "professionalize and technically modernize the Armed Forces, in other words, depoliticization."<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly, Narcís Serra was pro-NATO and viewed NATO membership as essential to carrying out this reform policy. Serra was aware that among the more democratic sectors of the military, pro-NATO sentiment was strong, and he wanted to do nothing that could spoil his relationship with the most progressive sector in the armed forces. Serra also reminded Gonzalez of the advantage of NATO membership in stimulating an already growing Spanish defense industry.<sup>31</sup> Development of the defense industry, in turn, would assist in improving the country's technological base and help ameliorate the chronic unemployment that plagued the Spanish economy.

These realities must have been making an impact, for González's increasing pro-NATO attitude and statements were creating tension within his

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<sup>30</sup>Rafael Bañón Martínez, "The Spanish Armed Forces during the Period of Political Transition", *Armed Forces and Society*, 319.

<sup>31</sup>In 1982 it ranked 11th in the world with sales of over 94 billion pesetas, and provided no fewer than 56,000 jobs. Mujal-Leon, "Foreign Policy of the Socialist Government," 230.

party and his cabinet. Foreign Minister Morán continued to oppose integration with NATO. The Vice President, Alfonso Guerra voiced similar opinions, as did the Ministers of Culture, Education, and Sanitation. Defense Minister Serra and Economics Minister Miguel Boyer supported González's position. Despite these cabinet differences, González's mind was made up by late 1984. Two years to the day he won the October 1982 elections, Felipe González surprised his party and his country by unequivocally announcing his approval of NATO membership.<sup>32</sup> During a State of the Nation debate before the Chamber of Deputies on 24 October 1984, González outlined his "*decalogo*" (ten points on Spanish security policy). The major points were:

1. Spain would remain in the Atlantic Alliance;
2. Spain would not become part of NATO's integrated military structure;
3. modification of bilateral treaties with the US in order to reduce US military presence in Spain;
4. maintenance of Spain's nonnuclear status (in effect since 1977);
5. Spain envisions signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;
6. Spain desires participation in the West European Union (WEU);
7. more progress must be made on obtaining a solution on the Gibraltar question;
8. Spain will continue to champion disarmament at international meetings;
9. the network of bilateral military cooperation agreements with other European countries must be enlarged; and
10. the strategic inter-services plan must be completed to provide a basis for defense matters.

González made no mention in his October speech to the referendum promise and with good reason. Opinion polls continued to show little enthusiasm

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<sup>32</sup>According to accounts, González made his announcement without consulting his party or his cabinet. Equip de Sociología Electoral, "El Referendum Sobre La OTAN Y Sus Consecuencias," *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 52 (July-August 1986): 187.

for NATO among Spanish voters. Those opposed to membership consistently outnumbered supporters by a wide margin: in July 1981 it was 35 to 20 percent; in March 1983 it was 57 to 13 percent; in July 1984 it was 41 to 30 percent.<sup>33</sup> Yet Felipe González could not avoid the referendum promise indefinitely. He had come to power partly on a platform which stressed ethics and honesty, and to renounce the referendum would destroy his already damaged credibility. He knew he could probably succeed in passing a referendum, but it would take enormous personal effort and there would be a heavy political price to pay. Despite the contrary opinions of some of his advisors, González felt he had no choice but to hold the referendum.

His first task was to get his internal house in order. In December 1984, at a Socialist Party Congress, González managed to push through his pro-NATO proposals over the strong objections of the party's youth and trade-union elements. He continued to promise, as detailed in the Party resolutions, a referendum prior to the end of the legislative session in October 1986. In July 1985, he further strengthened his control by dismissing Foreign Minister Morán, one the strongest opponents of Spain's integration into the alliance, and swiftly replacing him with a pro-NATO advocate, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez. The replacement of Morán was greeted with satisfaction by NATO representatives, who welcomed "the definitive end of Spanish governmental ambiguity with respect

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<sup>33</sup>Mujal-Leon, "Foreign Policy of the Socialist Government," 224.

to NATO."<sup>34</sup> González timed the cabinet reshuffle while negotiations for Spanish entry into the EEC were finally concluding, and his consolidation of support eased the final process of treaty ratification. Spain formally entered the EEC on 1 January 1986.

Now that he had Spain's entry into the Common Market assured he could proceed with his campaign to sway the electorate. In May 1985 the Spanish government requested new talks with the U.S. to reduce the number of American military personnel attached to the bases in Spain, together with the possibility of closing at least one U.S. installation. The 1976 military treaty of cooperation between Spain and the U.S. included a supplemental agreement banning the storage of nuclear warheads on Spanish bases, therefore González could use this to prove that Spain would remain free of nuclear weapons. On 9 November 1985, González directly linked Spain's coming induction into the EEC with the need to remain in NATO, and vowed his personal support for maintaining Spanish participation in NATO according to his ten point plan.<sup>35</sup> A month later in another party congress he was able to maintain party discipline and get his position approved, despite the opposition of many party members. The result was publication of the document, *Paz y Seguridad en España*, approved by the executive Committee of the PSOE, and which outlined the Spanish model of

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<sup>34</sup>Rodríguez, "Atlanticism and Europeanism," 66.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 66.



participation.<sup>36</sup> On 27 December 1985, González presented this document to the Congress of Deputies which approved it by absolute majority. In that same session, González finally announced the date for the long promised referendum -- 12 March 1986.

Despite González's seemingly omnipotent control over his party, the referendum appeared, especially to González's advisers, as a dangerous political gamble. Public opinion polls predicted swift defeat for the NATO issue, yet there were some grounds for thinking that the PSOE could win the referendum. The PSOE's main opposition on the right, Manuel Fraga Iribarne's Popular Alliance (AP) Party (the UCD had long since fragmented into separate parties) was more vociferously pro-Western than the government itself. The Communists were still split and weak, and seemed to pose little political threat. González tightened his own ranks by announcing that party members campaigning against the government would be subject to disciplinary action. The government also had control over the State's radio and television networks and it was determined to use this powerful advantage.

The government's reasoning to the Spanish public in favor of NATO participation were ironically, a mixture of the old arguments used by the UCD and a few new ones. The focus, nonetheless, remained on the political and economic advantages of NATO, not the military aspects. The PSOE

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<sup>36</sup>This document can be found in its original Spanish text in, Del Arenal and Aldecoa, *España y La OTAN*, 333.

acknowledged that Spain's territorial integrity and security would be better assured by remaining in NATO, but more important were the other factors: Spain's position, for example, *vis à vis* the United States in future negotiations over bases would be enhanced; it would strengthen the "European pillar" of NATO; within the alliance, Spain could work to ensure that the voice of Europe would be heard on an equal footing as that of Washington. NATO was also a fundamental prerequisite for the continued modernization of the country. The PSOE's project of industrial and technological reinvigoration was essential to overcome Spain's economic difficulties and such a process was dependent on access to foreign technology from both the U.S. and Western Europe, which NATO membership facilitated.

More than the positive aspects, Felipe González increasingly stressed the serious negative implications of departing NATO, relying on what one observer called, *el voto de miedo* (the fear vote): "anyone intending to vote against should think hard about the consequences of leaving."<sup>37</sup> González conjured up the specter of resulting political instability if the measure was defeated. Nothing gives a Spaniard more angst than the thought of renewed political turmoil (which might bring the military back into the picture), unless it is a threat to his pocketbook, and that consequence was also raised. The presidents of the country's eight leading banks publicly voiced their support for the government and declared on television that a victory for the anti-NATO forces would have an "unpredictable

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<sup>37</sup>Gooch, "A Surrealistic Referendum," 305.

effect on the country's economic prospects." The Government listed so many adverse effects of a "No" vote, that one commentator facetiously remarked that, "they have warned us of everything except an invasion of aids!"<sup>38</sup>

González even implied that he might resign if the people denied him their vote: "If you say no to NATO, you will have to find yourself another government that will agree with you, for I will not."<sup>39</sup> In such a way, González was attempting to equate the issue of voting for or against NATO with that of voting for the Socialists or for the rightist parties. This was a proposition that had much more meaning to the electorate.<sup>40</sup> In this regard, he was helped by the tactics of Manuel Fraga, leader of the conservative AP party. Fraga, was faced with the dilemma of having to support Gonzalez on an issue he favored, but one that he found totally unnecessary, given that membership had been endorsed by Parliament in 1981. The highly personalized campaign of Felipe González, seven months before a scheduled general election, meant that whatever was said to the contrary, a yes vote would be a vote of confidence for Felipe González. This is exactly the opposite of what the conservatives wanted. Consequently, Fraga urged

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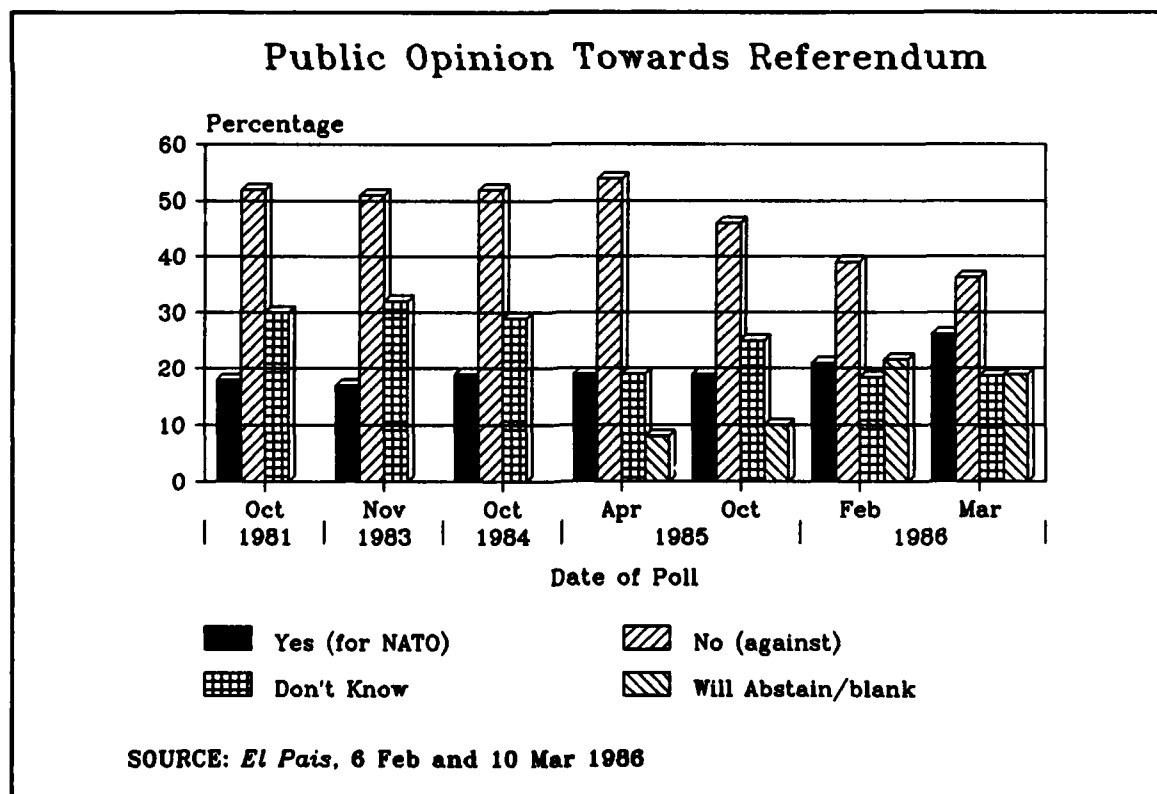
<sup>38</sup>Anatoly Krasikov, "The Fight is Not Over," *New Times*, 14 April 1986, 25; *Time*, 24 March 1986, 32.

<sup>39</sup>Simon Sánchez Montero, "Why We Reject Atlanticism," *World Marxist Review* 4 (April 1987): 77.

<sup>40</sup>In a thorough, albeit very technical, discussion of factors that most influence the Spanish electorate, ideological position and economic conditions were found to be the biggest variables. See conclusions in, Thomas Lancaster and Michael Lewis Beck, "The Spanish Voter: Tradition, Economics and Ideology," *The Journal of Politics*, 48 (August 1986): 669-670.

his followers to abstain, arguing that NATO integration must be total integration, and that such a matter should be, and had been decided by the Parliament as in other NATO countries. The dangerous use of the referendum stemmed exclusively from González's campaign rhetoric and he now will be forced to admit and repudiate it.

Fraga's tactics backfired. Voter turnout of 60 percent (as opposed to a 80 percent turnout in the 1982 elections) proved that the boycott had failed. Even the King, who does not vote or speak out on public issues, broke his custom by fulfilling his "civic duty" and voting, thus sending a clear signal to the conser-



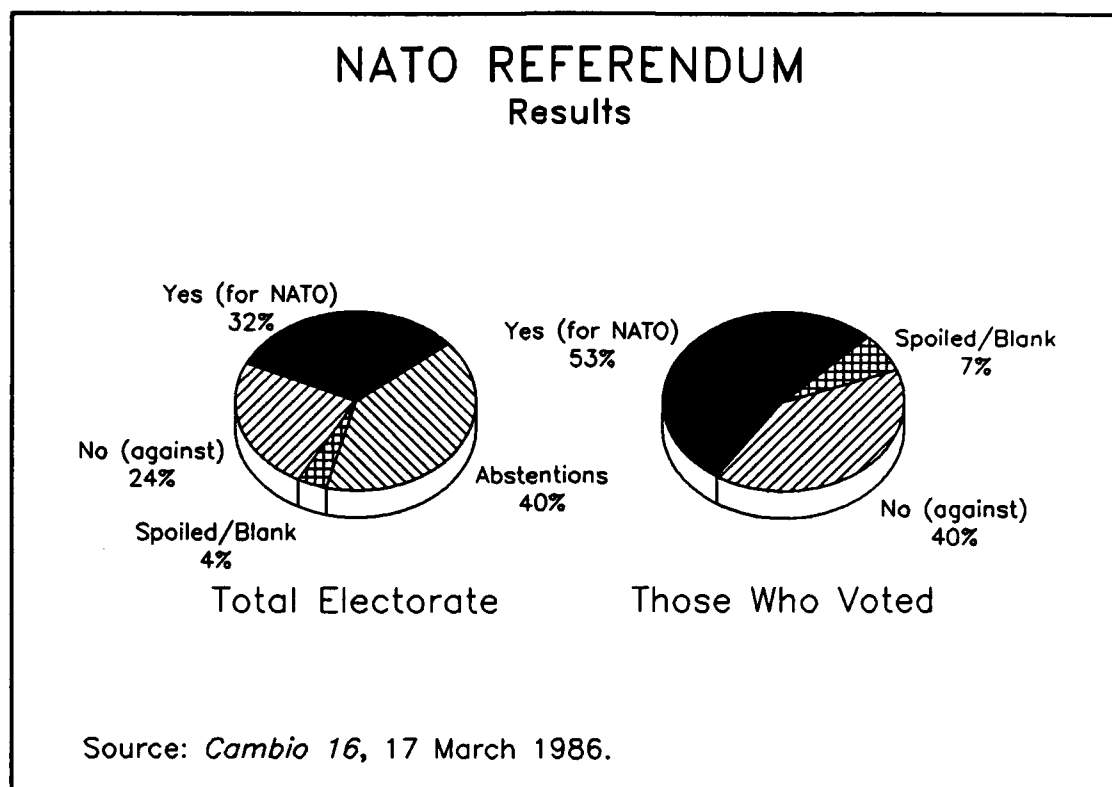
**Figure 2**

vatives. Fraga's opposition to the referendum resulted in a backlash of support to González and served to make the referendum even more of a vote of confidence than it might have already been. Nonetheless, opinion polls until the end continued to predict defeat for the government (Figure 2). González used every rhetorical and practical resource he had to persuade the voters, even to the point of allocating air time on radio and television in proportion to a party's share of parliamentary seats.<sup>41</sup> It was clear that González was determined not to let the electorate independently determine Spain's continued membership in NATO.

The outcome of the March 1986 referendum was a dramatic victory for González and the PSOE. Of the total electorate: 32 percent voted yes, 24 percent voted no, 40 percent abstained, with 4 percent blank or damaged votes; of those who voted: 53 percent voted yes, 40 percent voted no, with 7 percent blank or damaged votes (Figure 3). It was clear that many voters became nervous in the final moments about voting against González. Even if the voters were unconvinced about NATO, they feared the government's predictions of political instability, the undermining of economic growth, and a possible return of a rightist government. González also appeared to have convinced many Spaniards that NATO membership was linked with Spain's new EEC membership and with her further economic and technological integration into the Western world. Essential-

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<sup>41</sup>The television media was particularly accused of following the "official line." One analyst believes that the consistent way the press kept repeating that the no's would win prompted many Spaniards who had not intended to vote to do so and to vote in favor of NATO. Inocencio Felix Arias, "Spanish Media and the Two NATO campaigns," *Spain's Entry into NATO*, 40.



**Figure 3**

ly, however, González won because Socialist voters did not abandon their *líder*, and many conservative voters ignored Fraga's pleas and casted their votes in favor. But at least as important as Fraga's tactical error, was the wording of the NATO proposal.

González shrewdly did not present a clear up or down vote. Instead, the Spanish people were asked, "do you consider it advisable for Spain to remain in the Atlantic Alliance according to the terms set forth by the Government of the Nation?" The stipulations outlined were that Spain would remain outside NATO's integrated military structure, that Spain would remain non-nuclear, and that the government would continue to work for reduction of US forces in Spain (Table I). These conditions were obvious concessions to the anti-NATO forces within his

**Table I: Text of NATO Referendum, 12 March 1986**

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party and his nation, but it also allowed González to point out that he was not asking for an unqualified acceptance of total membership but on a commitment on Spain's terms. This *à la carte* approach was recommended by the Secretary General of NATO, Lord

The Government considers it in the national interest that Spain remain in the Atlantic Alliance and resolves that such participation be on the following terms:

1. The participation of Spain in the Atlantic Alliance will not include its incorporation in the integrated military structure.

2. The prohibition on the installation, storing, or introduction of nuclear arms will be maintained.

3. The progressive reduction of the military presence of the United States in Spain will be proceeded with.

**Question**

"Do you consider it advisable for Spain to remain in the Atlantic Alliance according to the terms set forth by the Government of the Nation?"

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Carrington, and it greatly appealed to González's instincts on what could or could not be acceptable to the Spanish people.

Was the NATO Referendum therefore truly a gamble? Perhaps not in reality the outcome may not have meant a change in Spanish foreign policy. Referendums in the Spanish constitutions are only "consultive" and are not binding.<sup>42</sup> If González would have lost he still would have an absolute majority in Parliament, and need not play De Gaulle and step down, or even honor the results. Even if he did follow the wishes of the electorate and announce his intention to withdrawal, Spain would have to give a year's notice, and parliamentary elections had to be held before October 1986. A new government could reaffirm NATO membership by simple majority vote in the parliament.

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<sup>42</sup>For a good study of the Spanish constitution and the Spanish political system see, Peter Donaghy and Michael Newton, *Spain: A Guide to Political and Economic Institutions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Even an improbable retreat of Spain from NATO would still leave her tied by treaty with the U.S. and in effect, indirectly fixed to the West European security structure.

The Referendum was still of enormous political consequence to Felipe González. It was the first electoral test of his government, and its success led González to call for elections four months early. In July 1986, the PSOE once again obtained an absolute majority of seats (albeit a little thinner than before). The consecutive absolute parliamentary majorities of 1982 and 1986 constituted an electoral accomplishment unprecedented in modern Spanish parliamentary history since 1810. It is a mark of González's ability to formulate an attractive, moderate, and appealing Socialist program and it demonstrated again his keen understanding of the Spanish people.

### **Felipe, the Party and NATO**

From all the evidence it is almost certain that Felipe González upon assumption of office in 1982 was still undecided on the government's position toward NATO. A referendum is an excellent way of withdrawing Spain from NATO but a very poor way of keeping her in it. If González had been really intent on leaving NATO, an almost assured NATO rejection in a referendum would have provided him the ideal justification to withdraw from the Alliance. On the other hand, if his plan was to stay in NATO, a referendum, given NATO's unpopularity, was a dangerous political proposition.



During the 1982 campaign the NATO issue had been useful to mobilize popular support and enhance the Socialist's image as a party of change. It was targeted at the popular sentiments of the people and based on the feelings of his own party; González virtually could take no other stance but to be anti-NATO. There was enough ambiguity in the Socialist approach, however, to allow future flexibility. González's objections, after all, were more based on the procedural methods used for entry and on the aims of Spanish participation, than on ideology. Once in office it became clearly evident that the practical advantages of remaining in the Alliance, particularly toward securing the goals of returning Spain back to Europe and of consolidating the democracy, far exceeded the political costs of reneging on a campaign pledge. If nothing else, Felipe González has always shown himself as being a very pragmatic politician.

González proved before 1982, and after, that he is willing to relinquish ideology for practical political considerations. It was Felipe González with the help of his old associate, Alfonso Guerra, that fought to discard the PSOE's Marxist platform after the disappointing election results in 1977 and 1979. González even resigned from the party as a tactical gesture, yet managed to regain full control of the PSOE leadership at an extraordinary party congress in 1979. From that time on, the party's leadership has made a major effort to depict a moderate and reasonable image, willing to "administer capitalism," not overthrow it.<sup>43</sup> Since 1982, but especially since 1986, the Socialist have presided

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<sup>43</sup>Stanley G. Payne, "Spain's Political Future," *Current History* 81 (Dec 1982): 420.

over an unprecedented economic boom, largely based on liberalizing and modernizing the economic structure. So successful in fact, that they have often been accused of "out-Thatchering Mrs. Thatcher."<sup>44</sup> Thus, in the view of one analyst, the pre-electoral anti-NATO stance was a means to offset the PSOE's mild economic platform and to demonstrate to the electorate that it remained a party of the left.<sup>45</sup>

Once decided in favor of remaining in the Alliance, González was still faced by a sizeable, influential, and vociferous faction within his party who remained adamant against NATO participation (not to mention the similar prevalent attitude among most Spaniards). The challenge then arose of formulating a consensus that would make NATO participation acceptable to the party and the nation. As a concession to pro-NATO forces, the government proposed continued membership in NATO. For opponents, it called for nonintegration in the Alliance's military command, a ban on nuclear weapons on Spanish territory, and a reduction of U.S. troops based in Spain.

Even this compromise did satisfy the hardline NATO opponents, either in the party or in society; yet González at least had the strength and stature within his party to impose his position on the party rank-in-file. Throughout his reign as party leader, he has consistently been able to pursue policies at variance with

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<sup>44</sup>For a good synopsis of Spain's economic progress see, Merrill Stevenson, "Who Speaks for Spain? A Survey," *The Economist*, 11 March 1989.

<sup>45</sup>Gillespie, *The Spanish Socialist Party*, 415.

traditional PSOE stances due to at least two factors that has limited the potential costs of a policy shift: first, González's charisma and power within the party, and second, the maintenance of a centralized and often authoritarian party structure.

González and his associates are credited with rebuilding a shattered party and leading it to power. González's public charisma, political ability, popularity, and proven electoral track record has made his position unassailable. The lack of an alternative to González has been a key source of his strength. During the 30th Party Congress in December 1984, González again drew on his popularity within the party to gain acceptance for the NATO policy reversal.

In the words of one internal PSOE critic, at key points González has convinced party members and voters that the choice is between "Felipe or chaos."<sup>46</sup>

Just as important as González's stature, has been the changes that González and Guerra have made in the party rules to avoid the type of fragmentation that has torn apart the PSOE's other competitors. At the 28th Congress in 1979, they passed a series of measures that removed power from the local PSOE unit, the *agrupación*, and shifted it to the provincial and regional levels of the party. By implementing a strict winner-take-all electoral system for party posts and delegates to conventions, and by bloc voting in party congresses, the leadership has managed to eliminate or at least quiet groups and factions within party governing organs and at the congresses. So effective has been the

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<sup>46</sup>Donald Share, "Spain: Socialists as Neoliberals," *San Francisco Socialist Review* 18 (Jan-Mar 1988): 35.

control of González and Guerra over the PSOE, that it has been likened by its critics to "democratic centralist manipulation."<sup>47</sup>

Adding to the further internal stabilization of the Party has been the incumbent status of the PSOE (which not only governs at the national level, but also dominates local, provincial, and regional governmental institutions in most parts of the country) and its powerful patronage resources. The PSOE is, from a comparative perspective, a small party, in 1984 over 50 percent of members held some party or government post, or had appeared on a Socialist Party list.<sup>48</sup> The very low ratio of members to voters (among the lowest in Europe), with the high percentage of leadership dependent members, has stifled criticism of the leadership. As a commentator aptly put it,

This is the politics of patronage, the politics of *amiguismo* [personal contacts]. Thus, if you don't agree [with the party executive] about everything, or at least keep your silence, you don't keep your job.<sup>49</sup>

González's control over the direction and discipline of his party, combined with his continued unchallenged popularity, even during the NATO Referendum campaign and periods of economic crisis, proved instrumental in rallying support for his NATO *volte-face*, and in pursuing subsequent policies that were often

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<sup>47</sup>Paul Heywood, "Mirror-images: the PCE and the PSOE in the Transition to Democracy in Spain" 10 (April 1987): 207.

<sup>48</sup>Share, "Socialists as Neoliberals," 59.

<sup>49</sup>The PSOE has been criticized for taking the traditional practice of *enchufismo*, or "jobs for the boys," beyond acceptable limits. Richard Gunther, "The Spanish Socialist Party," in *The Politics of Democratic Spain*, ed. Stanley G. Payne (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1986), 23.

unpopular among many Spaniards. It also gave his government, as the next Chapter will point out, the strength to challenge the military's traditional place in the political order.

### CHAPTER THREE

As part of their 1982 electoral platform, the PSOE outlined three defense policy objectives:

1. to bring the Spanish defense organization into line with the models prevalent in Western Europe;
2. to make the armed forces more efficient, better equipped, and professional;
3. and to create an industrial system that, without being unduly protectionist, might make Spain more independent from foreign suppliers in the production of weapons and equipment.<sup>1</sup>

The Socialists realized that the starting point for any modernization in the defense structure had to be the complete integration of the armed forces into the constitutional system, and the military's assumption of roles commensurate with a democratic parliamentary form of government.<sup>2</sup> The Socialists also sought to redraw the relationship between the armed forces and society. They aimed to eliminate the wide gulf that had developed in the Franco years between the two sectors, and make the military attuned to and part of the society they were pledged to serve.

The need to depoliticize the armed forces was imperative, but as the policy goals above show, the more fundamental aspiration was to bring Spanish society, and as an extension, Spanish industry, to the level of its European neighbors. The defense establishment provided a useful tool toward this end. Through

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<sup>1</sup>Narcís Serra, "La Política Española de Defensa," 176.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 176.

cooperative defense projects within NATO or bilaterally with other European countries, the PSOE hoped, not only to improve the military's capabilities, but to enhance the general strength of Spanish industry. In a nation with consistently high unemployment, backward technology, and fewer competitive industries, such opportunities could not be passed up. Thus even the military modernization plan never strayed too far away from its domestic political and economic components.

These objectives were not so different from those of the previous UCD governments, but the reforms already enacted during the transition, the aftermath of the failed coup of the 23rd of February, the overwhelming victory in the 1982 elections, and the PSOE's organizational and popular strength, now placed the new government in a better position to tackle the major structural changes needed to accomplish these tasks.

### **Institutional Reform**

The responsibility for the Ministry of Defense was given to one of the most able regional leaders of the party, the Catalan Narcís Serra. Serra, who has never done military service, was nonetheless a shrewd politician. Having come to power on a day discovered to be targeted for another coup, Serra and his PSOE associates proceeded cautiously with their reform program, determined not to trample on military sensitivities. They also took care to avoid the mistakes and antagonisms that were made during the Second Republic. Reforms have been

gradual and balanced by increased expenditures in new equipment and benefits. As a result, a recent poll of the military, cited Serra as the most regarded of the four defense ministers since the onset of the democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The cornerstone of the Socialist reform program, and the first to be enacted by the *Cortes*, was the revision to the Organic Law of Defense. Its purpose was to reinforce civil supremacy and redefine the relationship between the government and the armed forces. The 1984 Defense law distinguished between the "authority" exercised by the government and the "command" functions of the generals. The Law for the first time placed the direction of overall defense policy in the hands of the President of the Government. It buttressed his position as the "authority" personally responsible for directing defense policy in times of peace and war, and delegates to the Defense Minister the task of administering and coordinating the policies of the armed forces. An important innovation was the creation of the post of Chief of the Defense Staff (*Jefe del Estado Mayor de la Defensa*, or JEMAD). The JEMAD was given far greater powers than the previous Chairman of the Council of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JUJEM) established in 1977. The JEMAD was designated chief military adviser and collaborator to the Defense Minister in times of peace and, if so designated by the President of the Government, supreme commander of the armed forces in times of war. The JEMAD was made head of the JUJEM, which was now defined as "the chief advisory and consultative organ to the government in defense

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<sup>3</sup>*Epoca*, No. 219 (22-28 May 1989), 51-52.



matters."<sup>4</sup> The enhanced role of the JEMAD was hoped to increase operational effectiveness and make possible joint action by the three services. More significantly, the law removed the command functions from the highest military councils and instead turned them into mere consultative bodies subordinate to the Defense Minister. There is no longer any "military command", "joint command" or "military authority" which could possibly suggest the autonomy of the armed forces from the civilian government.

With the new Defense Law revisions, Serra named Admiral Angel Liberal Lucini as the new JEMAD. Adm. Liberal was known as a pro-reform and pro-NATO officer and his nomination was seen as a clear signal of the González's government future posture toward NATO. Since assuming office, Serra had been careful to work with much of the existing staff at the Defense Ministry rather than attempt a full sweep. With the completion of the reorganization, Serra swiftly moved to select officers supportive of his reforms to the JUJEM. By the first part of 1984, Serra was in firm control of the military chain of command and the top hierarchy was staffed by officers acceptable politically and professionally to the new government.

The military judiciary system was also revised in late 1983, for the second time since Franco's death. The new penal code further restricted the jurisdiction of military courts, mainly in the area of political crimes such as military rebellion,

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<sup>4</sup>For a good discussion of the Socialist reform program, particularly the changes brought by the 1984 Defense Law, see Col. Francisco L. de Sepúlveda, "Restructuring Spain's Defense Organization," *International Defense Review* 17 (October 1984): 1433.

which would henceforth be tried by civilian courts and would automatically entail the loss of military status and benefits. It also limited the principle of "due obedience" as a defense for illegal and unconstitutional acts and it abolished capital sentences by military courts, even in time of war.<sup>5</sup> In 1986 a further revision was carried out aimed at integrating the military justice system with the civil court system. The 1986 Law established independent tribunals staffed by professional jurists to dispense military justice, yet subordinated to the highest civil courts. The tribunals jurisdiction was limited strictly to technical or professional matters, leaving responsibility for ordinary criminal and political crimes to the civilian courts.

The government also moved to consummate other reforms begun during the transition period. The right of conscientious objection, recognized first by the Suárez government, was better defined. For the first time an alternate form of national service was offered, similar to those existent in other Western European countries. Objectors could now serve in various civilian roles for a period ranging from 18 to 24 months. Military education for cadets in the military academies was broadened to include more humanities and social sciences, and more instruction from civilian professors. Military wages were aligned with civil service wage scales, and the separation of the National Police and the Civil Guard (*Guardia Civil*) from the military was begun. In 1986 a new regulation required that from then on military officers taking appointments in the police forces had to resign their

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<sup>5</sup>*Cambio 16*, No. 621 (October 24, 1983), 47-48.

military commissions. That same year, a civilian for the first time was named head of the Civil Guard.

The strength of the civilian leadership was confirmed in November 1986, when the *Cortes* finally approved a bill that pardoned the UMD officers arrested in 1975, and promised their reintegration in the service at the rank which they would normally have reached. Neither the UCD governments or the Socialists had felt strong or secure enough earlier to pass this measure over the vociferous objections of the military's leadership. By the end of 1986, however, it was evident that the Socialists had indeed succeeded in restructuring the civil-military relationship along the lines of other European countries. The military, previously the ultimate arbiter of domestic politics had now been relegated to a pressure group with limited political power. The Ministry of Defense had now been fully constituted as a major political department led almost entirely by civilians. The beneficial result was a closer coordination between the Defense Ministry and the other government branches, especially between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. Spain's defense system could now effectively complement the nation's foreign policy objectives.

### **The Modernization Plan for the Land Army**

Even before the 1984 Defense Law, the Defense Ministry had already unveiled its new Modernization Plan for the Land Army (*Modernización del*

*Ejército de Tierra*, or META). The META represents the most ambitious and innovative restructuring of the Army since the Civil War.

The META eliminates the former distinctions between the strategic reserve and the territorial defense units in favor of one streamlined body of forces. As a result, the nine territorial brigades, formerly under the control of the nine regional captain-generals (and designed especially for domestic security), were eliminated. The nine military regions have also been reduced to six (Madrid, Seville, Valencia, Burgos, and La Coruña), and they have been given operational and logistical responsibility for local troops. The strength of the Spanish Army has therefore been reduced from the 1965 total of 24 brigades to the present 15. Eleven of these brigades have been consolidated into five divisions: one armored, one mechanized, one motorized and two mountain divisions. All the divisions have two brigades except for the 2nd Mechanized Division in the strategic south, which has been reinforced with three. The remaining four brigades (two armored cavalry, one air transportable, and one parachute) are separate and can operate independently. In addition there are garrisons in the Balearic and Canary islands and in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, to include the elite Spanish Legion and other more specialized units such as the Special Operations Group (GOE), the airmobile forces (FAMET), engineer regiments, anti-tank regiments, and an Electronic Warfare Company. The reorganization has involved a reduction in total

<b>Table II: The Army's five divisions and three independent brigades</b>		
Army enlisted		
strength from	Armored Division No. 1 "Brunete"	1 armored brigade (Madrid) 1 mechanized brigade (Badajóz)
250,000 in	Mechanized Division No. 2 "Guzman el Bueno"	1 mechanized brigade (Córdoba) 2 motorized brigades (Campo de Gibraltar/Almería)
1965 to	Motorized Division No.3 "Maestrazgo"	2 mechanized brigades (Valencia/Murcia)
approximately	Mountain Division No. 4	1 mountain brigade (Lerida) 1 high mountain brigade (Huesca)
200,000	Mountain Division No. 5	1 mountain brigade (Pamplona) 1 motorized brigade (Vitoria)
today. <sup>6</sup> The	Independent Brigades	1 parachute brigade (Alcalá de Henares) 1 air transportable light infantry brigade (La Coruña/Pontevedra) 2 Cavalry brigades (León/Saragossa)
reduced man-		
power		
requirements		

has enabled the government to reduce the required number of annual conscripts and lower the period of military service from 15 to 12 months.<sup>7</sup> The intention of Defense Ministry is to set up a mixed system halfway between an exclusively professional army and a conscript army. The volunteers will sign contracts ranging from 18 months to three years and will be assigned to the most specialized combat units (particularly those combat units eligible for deployment outside Spain), like the Parachute Brigade or the Spanish Legion, or will be trained to do

<sup>6</sup>Data obtained from René Luria and Xoán Taibo, "The Spanish Armed Forces Face the Future," and Sepúlveda, "Restructuring Spain's Defense Organization," in *International Defense Review*, No. 4 1989, and No.10 1984 respectively.

<sup>7</sup>Due to the growing resistance to military conscription, and the proposals of rival political parties (in an election year) to reduce or eliminate the "*mili*" as it is known in Spain, it was announced in late 1989 that the period of service would be reduced to only nine months.

the more technical jobs. Currently out of the 200,000 servicemen in the Army, 35,000 are volunteers and 165,000 are draftees, the Navy and the Air Force, being more technical services, have more volunteers.<sup>8</sup>

Paralleling the reorganization of the maneuver forces, is an ambitious infrastructure plan to consolidate the units into large modern brigade-size facilities, preferably away from major cities. Unfortunately, budgetary constraints and internal resistance have slowed progress in this area, and only a handful of units are presently stationed in modern installations.<sup>9</sup>

Closely tied to the efforts to streamline the force has been a renewed attempt to cut and restructure the size of the officer and noncommissioned officer (NCO) corps. The Ministry of Defense has instituted incentives (such as retirement at full pay), similar to Azaña's program in 1931 to encourage over 8,000 early retirements. The intent is to avoid drastic cuts by proceeding with the reductions gradually. Over a seven year period from 1984 to 1991, the Army's officer corps on active duty, counting NCOs will be reduced from 41,504 to 35,213, with nearly all the reductions coming from the commissioned ranks (Table III). It is hoped

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<sup>8</sup>Ruíz Palmer, "Spain's Security Policy and Army," 93.

<sup>9</sup>The plan, for example, to move the "Brunete" Armored Division was resisted by senior officers unwilling to leave the comforts of Madrid for the "wilds" of Extremadura. One brigade still remains today in Madrid. *The Economist*, 20 February 1988, 48.

these reductions in combination with a renewed emphasis on merit promotions will bring down the average of officers in line with NATO norms.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, many observers still think the 190 generals

remaining by 1991 excessive,

considering that the sum of

effective units is equivalent to

roughly a 20 brigade size

force. The Navy and Air

Force are also undergoing a

similar, albeit more restrained,

reduction in ranks. Both

services are reducing their officer corps by eight percent: from 11,836 to 10,899

for the Navy; from 13,165 to 12,111 for the Air Force.<sup>11</sup> The problems of the

Navy and Air Force are not so much organizational as in the areas of outdated

and obsolete equipment, ships, and aircraft.

**Table III: Army Officer Corp Reductions**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>% from 1984</u>
Lieutenant Generals	19	16	10	-47
Major Generals	51	74	35	-31
Brigadier Generals	130	160	98	-24
Colonels	1,960	1,364	600	-69
Lieutenant Colonels	1,969	1,995	1,475	-25
Majors	3,524	3,470	2,870	-18
Captains	7,228	6,436	5,995	-17
Lieutenants	9,093	8,847	6,450	-29
<u>NCOs</u>	<u>18,530</u>	<u>18,966</u>	<u>17,470</u>	<u>-05</u>
<u>Totals</u>	<u>41,504</u>	<u>41,328</u>	<u>35,213</u>	<u>-15</u>

SOURCE: Jane's Defense Weekly, 17 October 1987

<sup>10</sup>It is hoped by 1990 to reduce the average age, for instance, of captains to 26 and generals to 53, as opposed to the averages of 38 and 73 in 1985. Payne, "Modernization of the Armed Forces," 187.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 188.

## The Joint Strategic Plan

The META and the institutional reforms were only a component of a larger plan commissioned by the Socialist government to restructure the armed forces to meet Spain's strategic defense needs. The Joint Strategic Plan (*Plan Estratégico Conjunto*, or PEC) adopted in 1985, is the first comprehensive plan, involving all the services, which attempts to delineate the principles and objectives of Spanish defense policy. The PEC attempts to cover every facet of defense planning: it identifies Spain's interests and potential threats to them; it spells out the strategies necessary to deter aggression and defend Spanish interests and territories; and it establishes the organization of each service, the deployment and equipment of the armed forces, and the resources, priorities, and timetables necessary to meet foreseeable threats.<sup>12</sup> The PEC presently in effect covers the period 1986-1994 and is scheduled for review every two years.

The PEC identifies an area of strategic interest for Spain that stretches as far north as Brest, including the whole of the Bay of Biscay (see Map on page 120). To the south it reaches as far as 900 kilometers south of the Canary Islands, encompassing the continental shelf off the Saharan coast. To the east it goes as far as Corsica and Sardinia, and to the west, as far as the Azores Islands. It is an area deemed vital for protecting the shipping routes necessary for the supply of Spanish territories by sea. Within this area, two major threats are envisioned: one

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<sup>12</sup>The PCE is a classified document, but enough information has been reported in the Spanish press to adequately construct its content.



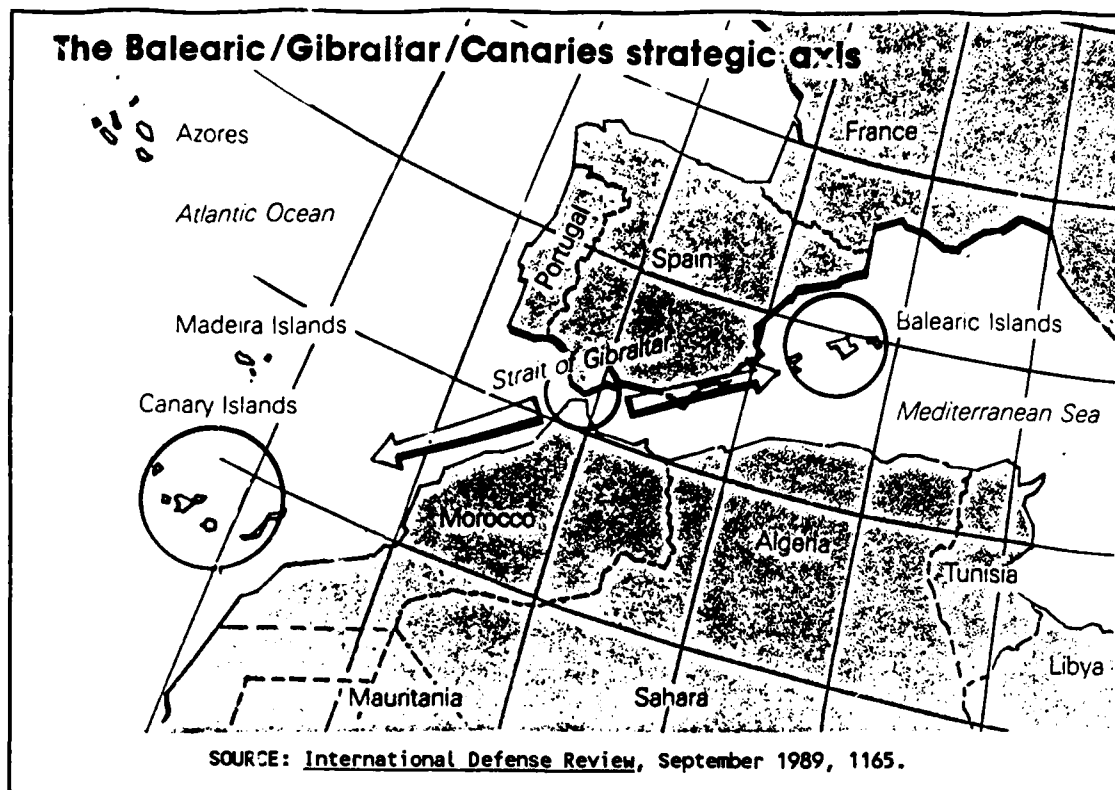
from the Warsaw Pact, which even in 1985 was seen as remote but potentially devastating; the other from North Africa, which was less serious but more probable.

Considering these two threat scenarios, the PEC has shifted the focus and the "center of gravity" of the defense system towards North Africa, specifically focusing on the Straits of Gibraltar as the "central point of the Spanish strategic effort."<sup>13</sup> Although not ignoring the northern threat from Central Europe, the PEC concentrates Spanish strategy on accomplishing two major tasks. First, the reinforcement of the southern part of the peninsula to meet a possible conflict with Morocco or any other North African country. Second, the control over the Straits of Gibraltar and its approaches through command of the strategic axis running from the Balearic Islands via the Straits to the Canary Islands (Figure 4). The command of the Balearic-Gibraltar-Canary axis is seen as essential to safeguard the Canary Islands from any armed aggression emanating from the so-called Saharan corridor and to protect the critical sea lines of communications (SLOCs) passing around the Canary Islands, which transport nearly 70 percent of the energy products needed by Europe and 44 percent of Spanish trade.<sup>14</sup> Since

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<sup>13</sup>Vicenç Fisas Armengol, *Una Alternativa a la Política de Defensa de España* (Barcelona: Editorial Fontamara, 1985), 170. Pages 154-234 of this work offers some of the best discussions on the PEC and Spanish defense strategy (under the PSOE) in general. It has provided the bulk of the information in this section.

<sup>14</sup>Angel Viñas, "Spain and Nato: Internal Debate and External Challenges," *NATO's Southern Allies: Internal and External Challenges*, ed. John Chipman (London: Routledge, 1988), 181.



**Figure 4**

both Spain and NATO have common interest in ensuring the freedom of the oil and sea routes passing through the Canaries and entering the Straits of Gibraltar, the PEC envisions a coordination of action with NATO in a general East-West conflagration, but acknowledges Spain's responsibility to act alone in a limited war with any North African state. The PEC nevertheless is the first document to integrate Spain's defense planning with NATO. Prepared during 1984-85 (before the NATO Referendum), its reliance on NATO cooperation to achieve basic Spanish defense objectives was yet another tool the government could use to

justify the need to remain in the Alliance. As the Defense Minister admitted, "if Spain leaves NATO, the contents of the PEC would have to be modified."<sup>15</sup>

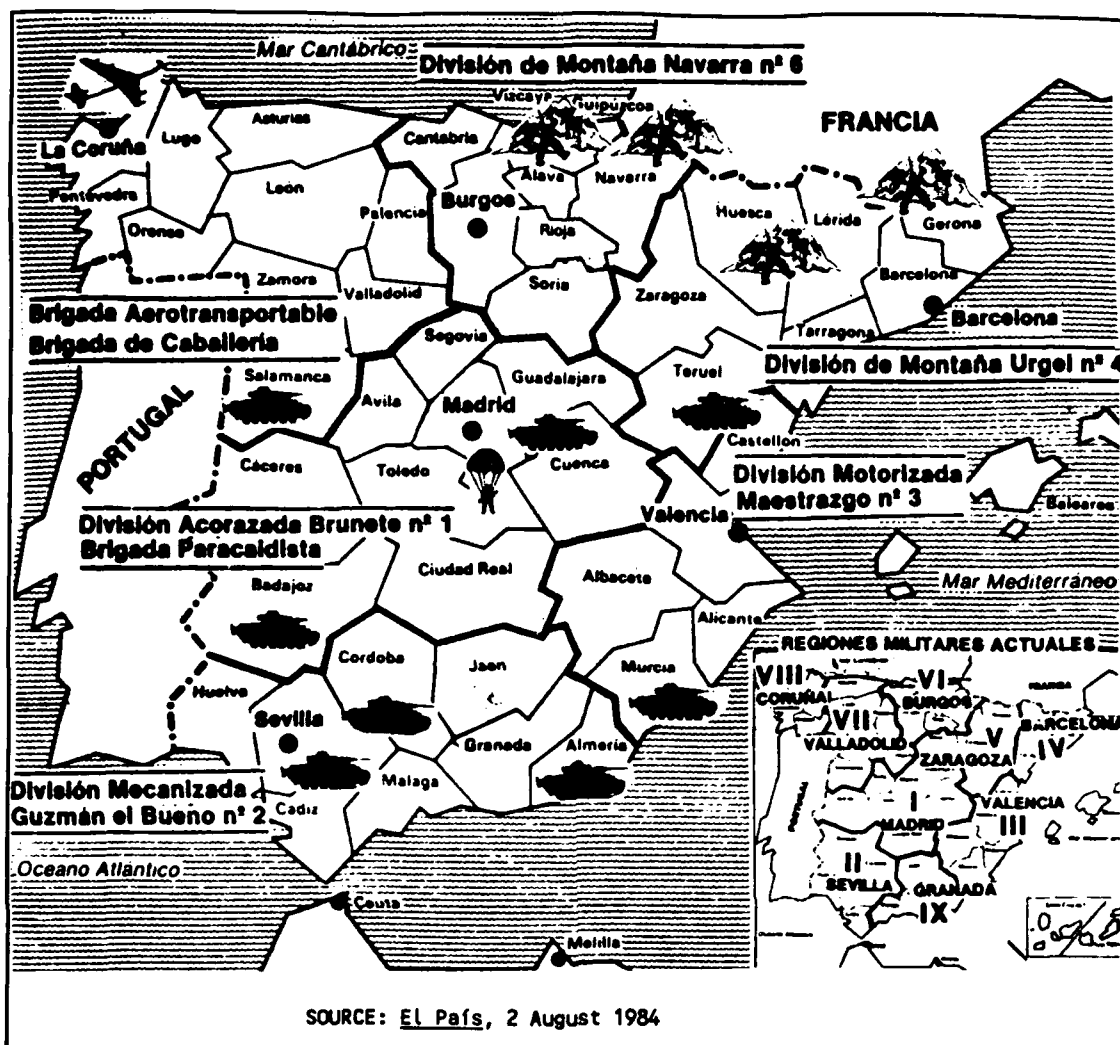
The strategic and tactical shift of the PEC toward the south has led to a corresponding increase in the concentration and quality of the three services in the southern and eastern parts of the national territory. Accordingly, the Army's has deployed its forces with two mountain divisions along the Pyrenees, a mechanized division (reinforced with an additional brigade) in Andalucía protecting the Straits, a motorized division in the Levant, one air-transportable brigade in the rearguard in Galicia, with the Armored Division, the FAMET, and the two cavalry brigades in the center to be deployed where needed (Figure 5).

The elite Spanish Legion is also being revamped to increase its readiness for operations in North Africa. Two of the four regiments are currently being consolidated at Ronda near the Mediterranean port of Málaga and are being transformed into helicopter-borne units. The other two regiments at Ceuta and Melilla are being up-gunned with *Milan* anti-tank missiles and modern combat vehicles. The Army has also purchased *Roland* and *Aspide* low-level anti-aircraft missile systems to supplement the *Hawk* and *Nike* anti-aircraft missiles which protect the Straits and southern coasts, and the air bases and the telecommunication centers along them.

The Air Force and the Navy are similarly oriented southward. The major air bases in the south, at Manises (Valencia), Los Llanos (Albacete) and Morón

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<sup>15</sup>Fisas Armengol, "Una Alternativa a Política de Defensa," 168.



**Figure 5: The Military Regions and the Distribution of the Operational Brigades**

(Sevilla) are being upgraded, to include the construction of hardened concrete shelters for aircraft protection. Two of the wings of the recently acquired EF-18A/B *Hornets* fighters are destined for operations in the south, with one especially reserved for naval-aviation warfare. Spain's air defense system, code named "Combat Grande" is also undergoing a third upgrade, allowing for the complete monitoring of the eastern and southern areas as far as the Canary Islands.

The Navy has launched an ambitious strategy to achieve command of the sea lanes adjacent to Spanish territories, principally the vital Canary-Gibraltar-Balearic axis. The Spanish Navy's eight submarines (*Delfin* and *Agosta* class) and six corvettes (*Decubieta* class) have been concentrated at Cartagena (on the southern Mediterranean coast) to control the access points to the Straits, leaving the Navy's former premier base at El Ferrol (on the Northwest Atlantic coast) as a support and maintenance base. The Marine Light Infantry have also been reequipped with new howitzers and light tanks.

The cornerstone of the Navy's efforts is on strengthening and modernizing its Aeronaval Battle Group *Alfa* to protect the maritime traffic along the Canary-Gibraltar-Balearic route. The naval base at Rota has been improved to host the Battle Group, which in 1989 received the long awaited *Príncipe de Asturias* aircraft carrier (replacing the aircraft carrier *Dédalo* built in 1942). The Battle Group that will be formed around the *Príncipe de Asturias* with its compliment of *Matador* (*Harrier*) V/STOL aircraft and *Sea King* helicopters, will consist of four (soon to be five) newly built *Santa María* class (FFG-7) frigates, four *Baleares* (Knox class) class frigates, and the corvettes and submarines as needed. Both the aircraft carrier and the *Santa María* class frigates are equipped with the most modern and sophisticated anti-submarine warfare systems, and the other escort vessels are presently undergoing modernization. The Navy in accordance with the PEC has planned for two potential types of conflict: a small low intensity conflict in the Atlantic or in Mediterranean areas close to Spain

(notably Morocco), and a high intensity confrontation between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. The Navy admits that its role in a Mediterranean conflict would be limited. The proximity of many land based forces would decidedly hamper effective naval operations. Therefore, it is Spain's role in Western defense that has provided the Navy with its main justification for expansion.

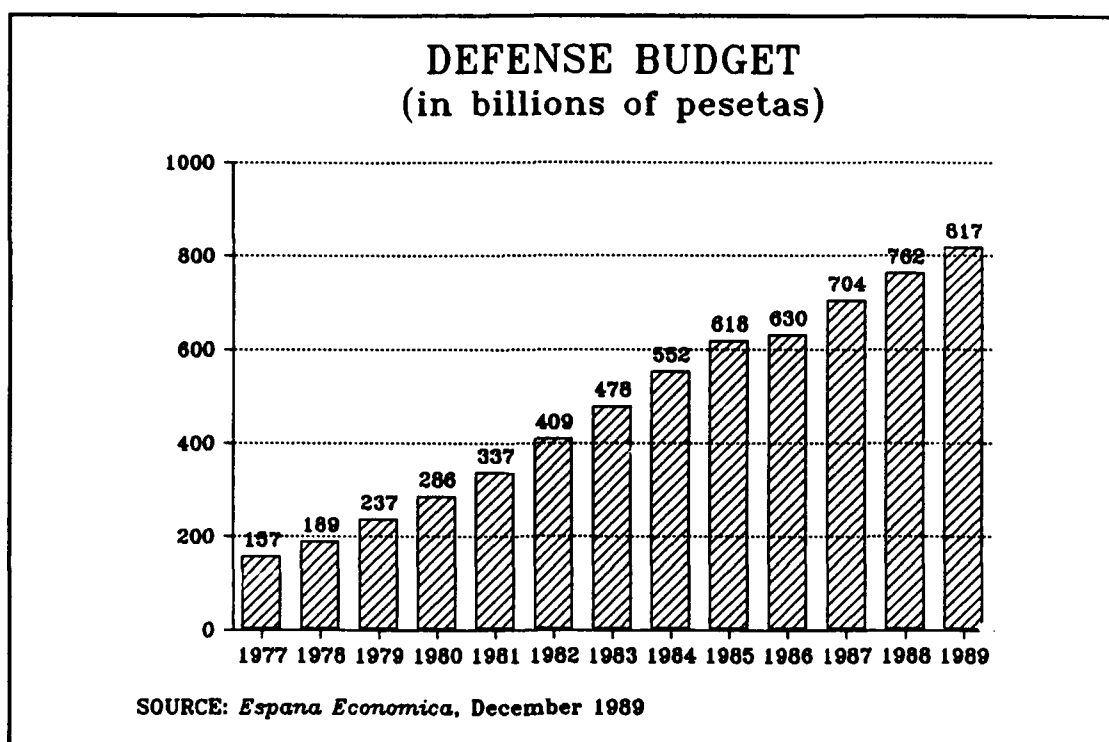
### **The Modernization Challenge**

The PEC has not only detailed the strategy for meeting Spain's defense needs, but it has also provided the blue print for the extensive modernization plan to meet these requirements. The budgetary neglect and the structural defects of the military in the Franco years left the Spanish armed forces with largely obsolete equipment and weaponry. The cost of modernizing the force is enormous but the Socialist government has tried to provide the military the means with which to modernize. Even through periods of economic difficulty, the Spanish military has received steadily rising budgets (Figure 6).

Spanish defense spending has increased relatively and absolutely in the past 12 years from a 157 million pesetas in 1977 to 817 million in 1989, equating to a 520 percent increase in total spending and almost a 40 percent increase in real terms.<sup>16</sup> But the PSOE has also had to balance its commitment to the armed

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<sup>16</sup>Miguel Ormaetxea, "El Ejército Profesional es Viable," *España Económica*, No 713 (December 1989), 11.



**Figure 6**

forces with more pressing budgetary demands, acerbated by an economy racked with high unemployment and large public sector deficits. Consequently, the defense ministry still has had to wage a constant struggle to secure the funds it needs and to maximize the amount of money it does receive. While critics may argue that Spain spends eight times more on weapons than on the Ministry of Culture, Spanish defense spending has actually decreased as a percentage of the total government's budget (see Table IV below). Defense spending as a percentage of GDP averaged 2.3 percent between 1980-89 and is well below the European NATO average of 3.4 percent for the same time period. This level of

defense expenditures is one of the lowest in Europe, matching the outlays of Denmark and Italy (with only Luxembourg spending less).<sup>17</sup>

What the government has managed to do, is to eliminate the Francoist domination of the Army in budgetary matters, down to a 42 percent share of the budget in 1989 (the Navy had 24 percent and the Air Force had 22 percent), and to lower the total ratio of personnel

**Table IV: Spain's Defense Budgets**

(Billions of then-year Dollars)					
			Growth Over Previous Year	% of Gov't Budget	% of GNP
1982	\$3.3	--		11.6	--
1983	\$3.9	14.4%		10.6	--
1984	\$4.5	13.4%		10.2	--
1985	\$5.0	10.6%		10.1	2.4
1986	\$5.1	1.9%		8.8	2.2
1987	\$5.7	10.3		8.9	2.4
1988	\$6.2	7.6		8.5	2.1
1989	\$6.7	6.8		7.7	2.1

SOURCE: *Armed Forces Journal International*, December 1988, 40; *NATO Review*, No.1 (February 1990), 32.

costs to equipment and investment costs. In 1983 it was 52 to 48, by 1989 it had dropped to 46 to 54. The goal is to achieve the optimum ratio of 40 to 60.<sup>18</sup>

The budgetary constraints have made it difficult for the government to maintain its pace of desired modernization and have made defense expenditures in general a sensitive political item (not unlike the United States). Each service's defense budgets has been saddled with the enormous costs of the "big ticket" programs, leaving little for the more mundane, but often essential items. Of the three

<sup>17</sup>*NATO Review*, No.1 (February 1990), 32.

<sup>18</sup>*Armed Forces Journal International*, January 1988, 26; and December 1988, 40.



services, the Army still remains the more constrained fiscally and the least modernized; almost 60 percent of its budget still is earmarked for personnel programs. Consequently, the Army has had to juggle its remaining funds between numerous competing priorities. The Army, for example, had to scrap its plan to replace the antiquated fleet of U.S. made Korean War vintage M-47 and M-48 tanks for the new German-designed *Lince* (Lynx) Main Battle Tank (MBT). The money was channeled instead for higher priority items such as the *Roland* and *Aspide* anti-aircraft missiles (for the defense of the Straits), Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs), and communications equipment. The Army therefore has only 300 "modern" French-made AMX-30 Tanks and only enough money to upgrade half of them to prolong their life into the 1990s. As an interim solution, it was just announced that Spain would negotiate with the United States to purchase between 400 and 500 M-60A1s and M-60A3s tanks that will have to retired from Central Europe as a result of the conventional forces reduction accords signed in Paris on 19 November 1990. The M-60s will become Spain's MBT in the 1990s until a new generation NATO MBT can be purchased.<sup>19</sup>

The Air Force is in much better shape, as only 34 percent of its budget is dedicated to personnel costs, but its decision in 1985 to seek the purchase of 72 American-made F-18s, and its commitment to procure 100 of the new European Fighter Aircraft (being currently developed) risks outrunning its total resources. The purchase of the F-18s was one of the most expensive and controversial of all

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<sup>19</sup>*El País*, 2 November 1990.

the arms deals negotiated by the Socialist government. Due to their extremely high technology, these could not for the most part be manufactured in Spain, even with foreign license. Critics urged cheaper European alternatives, or at least some which offered concessions such as domestic production and increased technology transfer. The Air Force held out for the American aircraft as the best available (largely due to their flexibility and range to meet the requirements of commanding the Canaries-Gibraltar-Balearic axis), and the Defense Ministry ultimately agreed, with delivery spaced from 1986 to 1990. The Air Force initially expressed a requirement for 144 F-18s, but it was reduced to 72 aircraft because of the high price. The enormous cost of these aircraft and their related missile and bomb weaponry has left little money for anything else. The Air Force's 24 Mirage III aircraft are being modernized since there is insufficient funds to seek a replacement, and the purchases of enhanced transport, electronic warfare, maritime patrol, and distant-warning aircraft have had to be slowed down or postponed. Nevertheless, of the three services, the Air Force is the most modern and effective. It is well equipped, with a sound infrastructure and possesses well trained pilots. If there is a major problem, it is (like in other NATO countries) in the retention of pilots lured by the much higher pay of civilian aeronautical companies. This has caused a critical shortage of pilots in certain units (with pilot to aircraft ratios often reaching one to one or lower).

Of the three services, the Navy, after years of neglect, has made the greatest strides forward under both the UCD and the Socialist governments. The

Navy has a far smaller amount of total tonnage now than ten or twenty years ago, but its capabilities have steadily expanded. The Navy has directed its focus on building its Aeronaval Battle Group *Alfa* toward the mission of protecting the sea lanes along the "axis." But like the Air Force, the cost of constructing, equipping, and maintaining the Battle Group, with all its associated V/STOL and sophisticated anti-submarine helicopters has been enormous. The Navy has also made strides to reequip and modernize its amphibious warfare capability. The emphasis, however, on naval aviation and amphibious operation capabilities, has meant sacrificing other important areas in minesweeping, escort vessels, and open-sea logistical support capabilities.

The Battle Group however impressive its capabilities, is still insufficient to control the area desired, and some analysts doubt that it is even adequate enough to escort very large convoys. The Battle Group is principally designed as an anti-submarine warfare force, and although it has considerable anti-surface and anti-air capability, even the Chief of the Naval Staff admitted that it was not suited for operations near potentially hostile coasts, which would exclude operations in the Strait of Gibraltar area, its approaches, and to some extent in the Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup> Thus the pride of the Spanish Navy has been designed to meet contingencies that would probably only occur during a general European conflict, which appears more and more unlikely. Consequently, some observers fear that

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<sup>20</sup>Joris Janssen Lok, "North Atlantic Role for Spanish Navy Aircraft Carrier," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 29 April 1989, 730.

the Spanish Navy has tried to equip itself beyond its financial means by sacrificing certain real needs in favor of the Battle Group.

### **The Role of the Defense Industries**

Spanish defense policy under the Socialist government has been closely linked from the onset with the larger goal of promoting and enhancing Spanish industry, specifically in the defense sector. Spanish defense industry has a long history. Spain has been designing and producing modern military equipment, including warships, aircraft, and small arms since the turn of the century, but neutrality during two World Wars, Spain's economic isolation during the early Franco years, and reliance on American military equipment after the 1953 U.S.-Spanish defense agreements, combined to hinder the development of the industrial defense sector. The heightened pace of industrialization beginning in the 1960s and the creation of a unified Defense Ministry in 1977 gave a needed encouragement to the defense sector, but by 1982 it was still plagued by low technology, overdependence on foreign suppliers, and high production costs. The Socialist government hoped to reverse this situation by tying the military's modernization program to domestic industries and consequently making the defense sector one of the leading growth areas in the economy. It was believed that the military's modernization program would complement the domestic economic aims of increasing employment, raising the technological level of

Spanish industry, and generating exports.<sup>21</sup> The Socialists self-stated objectives in the defense industrial sector reflected this:

1. Reducing the dependence on foreign suppliers;
2. raising the level of technology;
3. emphasizing international cooperation projects in conditions congruent with the first two goals.<sup>22</sup>

The focal point of Spanish procurement policy became maximizing the domestic content of the Spanish armed forces' equipment by purchasing domestically developed equipment, and limiting imports to those systems that could that could not be manufactured in Spain, or produced domestically as a result of international cooperation.<sup>23</sup> The PSOE government has insisted that any foreign purchase must be accompanied with mechanisms of manufacture that ensure either domestic production licenses, coproduction, or substantial (financial or industrial) offset agreements. The aim is to give preference to those systems that generate added value in Spain, especially if accompanied by technology transfer. Most of the weapon systems previously mentioned have been built or purchased under such arrangements.

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<sup>21</sup>This approach to economic growth in the 1980s was not unique to Spain. Ronald Reagan was pursuing a similar tactic.

<sup>22</sup>Angel Viñas, "La Política Industrial Española de Defensa," *Leviatán* 20 (Summer 1985): 56-57.

<sup>23</sup>Current domestic content of the armed forces equipment has not reached 35 percent, the goal is to equal Italy's level of 75 percent by the year 2000. Jaime Pérez Guerra and René Luria, "The Spanish Defense Industry Today," *International Defense Review* 21 (April 1988): 566.

The State-owned Empresa Nacional Bazán de Construcciones for instance, built and is upgrading the Army's AMX-30 MBTs under license. Bazán also built or is building a variety of warships: patrol vessels; the *Baleares*, *Descubierta*, and (U.S designed) *Santa María*-class frigates; two classes of submarines (under French license); and the aircraft carrier *Príncipe de Asturias* (also U.S. designed). What cannot be done in Spain is compensated by offset arrangements. The Defense Ministry is currently running some 40 offset programs that by 1988 had brought in some \$600 million.<sup>24</sup> The largest have been in the EF-18s, *Harrier* AV-8Bs, and *Roland* surface to air missile systems. The EF-18 arrangement is the largest in both size and complexity. The offsets cover the whole of the \$1,543 million paid for the 72 aircraft. They include domestic manufacture of components and associate equipment for the aircraft (such as circuits, the radar system, flight simulators, and laser guided bombs) to the purchase by the U.S. of various Spanish products including a sailboat and foodstuffs. The contract stipulates that the offsets involving a transfer of advanced technology must be in excess of 40 percent of the purchase value, and those involving direct technology transfer must be at least 10 percent.

Even with these terms the limited size of the national market does not allow the Spanish defense industry to efficiently develop or maximize the sophisticated equipment needed by the armed forces. The Defense Ministry con-

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<sup>24</sup>Jaime Pérez Guerra and René Luria, "Spanish Military Research and Development," *International Defense Review* 21 (September 1988): 1153

cluded that the best solution was a two part strategy of export promotion and collaboration with other countries.

Spanish arms sales spurred ahead in the 1980s, increasing approximately by 20 percent in each of the first two years of the Socialist government, and totaling 130 billion pesetas by 1984. By that year the Spanish arms industry ranked eleventh or twelfth in the world and accounted for nearly 60,000 jobs, reaching 70,000 by 1989, but by 1988 growth had stagnated.<sup>25</sup> Spain remained hampered by limited product range, lack of high technology and intense competition caused by the emergence of new arms-exporting countries. To fight this trend, the Socialist government has been willing to sacrifice ideology for sales. While committed to the Contadora peace process, for example, it has not kept them from selling military planes to both Nicaragua and Honduras. Sales were made to Stroessner's Paraguay, Qaddafi's Libya, Pinochet's Chile, and the Spanish press has recently exposed the extensive sales by Spanish companies of military arms and equipment to the "thief of Baghdad."<sup>26</sup> Despite the latent conflict with Morocco and its designation as a potential enemy in the PEC, Morocco has even become an important customer. Most of these arms exports were focused on weapons at a middle level of technology, especially in light products and dual-purposed equipment, such as explosives, light arms, ammunition, some electronics, and transport and fighting vehicles (trucks, jeeps and so forth). In 1988, heavy

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<sup>25</sup>Payne, "Modernization of the Armed Forces," 190

<sup>26</sup>*Cambio 16*, No. 979 (27 August 1990), 38-41.

weapons (patrol ships, planes, frigates, tanks) surpassed light items for the very first time. The principal buyers were Egypt, Morocco, Mexico, Indonesia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, and Somalia.<sup>27</sup>

The Socialists' main effort, however, has been in expanding participation in bilateral and multinational projects. Through these efforts, Spain will be involved at all stages, from design definition to quantity production. She will also gain access to the latest advanced technologies, that in turn, can be used to improve the competitiveness of her defense industries, raise the technological base, and encourage domestic research and development (all of which will hopefully have a "spin off" effect to the civilian sector). The primary sphere for these cooperative projects is within or related to NATO. The opportunities within NATO, particularly for research and development, were a potent argument used by the Socialists to justify their desire to remain in the Alliance. Consequently, Spain's reticence to be associated with the NATO command structure, has not carried over in the area of cooperative defense projects. In fact, in the area of joint weaponry and technological research, development, and production, Spain is the most eager and heavily involved of the sixteen NATO countries.

Spain chairs the Independent European Program Group (IEPG) that coordinates European cooperative defense projects. She is a member of NATO's Armament Director's Conference (ADC), the NATO Industrial Advisory Group (NIAG), and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization (NAMSO).

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<sup>27</sup>*Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 20 July 1989, 31.



Within the IEPG, Spain is one of the medium-sized nations which receives technical assistance from the more industrialized countries. Spain participates in 20 IEPG programs, to include the *Trigat* anti-tank missile, the *ASRAAM* air-to-air and *Maverick* air-to-surface missiles, the *MSAM* and *Mistral* surface-to-air missiles, the *ASAM* surface-to-surface missile, anti-submarine projects, a new attack helicopter, and other light weapons systems. Within the ADC, Spain is working on some 50 of 200 ADC projects and receives information on some 100 other projects.<sup>28</sup> Out of the 40 major NATO programs now under way, Spain is involved in 25; this percentage, 62.5 percent is unequaled by any other NATO country.<sup>29</sup> Of these programs (Table V) no fewer than 15 involve communications, navigation, electronic warfare, missile and intelligent munitions. So extensive is the Spanish presence in international programs that one analyst commented that the Defense Ministry appeared to have caught "chip fever."<sup>30</sup>

This high level of participation has been a source of much criticism, particularly from the business sector. Critics claim that the that the government is more concerned about its outside image than it is about rational arms production plans. They say that the investment costs in the international programs increasingly uses up a greater portion of the overall military budget, and practically the entire budget devoted to research and development until 1993. It

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<sup>28</sup>Pérez Guerra and Luria, "The Spanish Defense Industry Today," 566.

<sup>29</sup>FBIS, 22 February 1989, 17.

<sup>30</sup>*Cambio* 16, No. 886 (21 November 1988): 24-24.

also plays to the military's  
 penchant for sophisticated  
 "toys," rather than to an arms  
 purchasing policy that takes  
 Spain's industrial and  
 technological level into ac-  
 count. It has also not  
 improved the health of the  
 defense industrial sector, 64  
 percent of which is under the  
 control of the two state  
 holding companies, *Instituto*  
*Nacional de Industria* (INI) or  
 the *Compañía Telefónica*

**Table V: Programs in Which the Gov-  
 ernment Participates**

Name	Percent	Spending Approved through 1989 (billions of pesetas)
NATO-MIDS (information system)	05	91
MSOW (self-propelled munition)	--	--
APSE (military computers)	05	--
EFA (combat aircraft)	13	175,000
NILE (computer hookup)	12.5	9.375
POST-2000 (military communications)	--	--
NIS (friend/foe identification system)	--	--
NAVSTAR-GPS (satellite-navigation system)	4.74	39.71
FAMS (antiaircraft missile system)	25	479.2
NAAWS (antiaircraft missile system)	10.6	445.2
APGM (munitions)	--	--
A 129-LAH (Light Attack helicopter)	5	126.586
NFR-90 (frigate of the 1990s)	12.5	2,230
SINS (navigation system)	10	11.9

SOURCE: *Cambio 16*, No.886 (21 November 1988)

*Nacional de España* (CTNE). Most of the major public enterprises such as Bazán, CASA, or Santa Bárbara have consistently operated in the red, propped up by public funds.

The Defense Ministry is continuing to make efforts to better rationalize the public defense sectors, especially as 1989-1990 witnessed a world wide drop in demand for armaments. Nevertheless, the Defense Ministry continues to defend its strategy as the best way of gaining access to needed technology, which will have greater long term benefits over any short term cost. The immediate aim of

enhancing Spain's participation in the latest U.S. and European research projects, toward the PSOE's eventual goal of bringing Spanish industries technologically up to level of its West European partners, appears to take priority over more practical military arms requirements.

### **How Effective the Reforms?**

The effectiveness of the Socialist reforms must be evaluated from various perspectives. The PSOE has succeeded in creating a smaller, leaner, and more combat ready force than at any time in recent history. They are quantitatively and qualitatively superior to any of their immediate potential adversaries in North Africa, and should be able to handle any challenges from across the Straits. In a general European conflict, Spain by herself would be hard pressed to control the Gibraltar chokepoint, let alone the Canaries-Straits-Balearic Axis, against a modern determined opponent. Nevertheless, her assistance to the Alliance is such an eventuality would not be negligible. In general, her contribution to Western defense would not compare with that of Germany, France, or the United Kingdom, but she has the capability to contribute as much or more than any other European NATO country.

This does not hide the fact that Spain in the military sphere remains technically one of the most backward of the NATO countries. According to an equipment index (derived from the relation of personnel expenditures to total

defense investments) Spain ranks last in NATO with a rating of 0.53, beaten even by Greece with a 0.78 rating.<sup>31</sup> As one Colonel in the General Staff said,

We have a few effective units such as the Legion, the Parachutists, and the Armored Division. The Air Force is the best equipped with its new F-18 aircraft and the Navy has improved with the incorporation of the aircraft carrier *Príncipe de Asturias*, but there is little beyond that. The rest of the units, in the event of conflict, would be more a hindrance than a help.<sup>32</sup>

Yet the question of the effectiveness of the Spanish armed forces goes beyond mere inadequate or obsolete equipment, that is a problem that is slowly being remedied. The Defense Ministry's principal worries are in the continuing, if not growing gulf, between Spanish society and its armed forces, and in this respect, the Socialist government has failed to achieve one of its primary goals.

Sociological surveys have demonstrated the strong pacifist attitudes of many Spaniards. This is not unusual considering Spain's neutrality during two world wars, the tragedy of the Civil War, and Franco's propaganda campaigns. Still, the force of this sentiment is surprising (see Table VI below). Three quarters of Spaniards believe there is no value or ideal worth going to war for; only one quarter of them think Spain should defend Ceuta and Melilla against a Moroccan attack; and only one third are willing themselves to take up arms to defend Spain.<sup>33</sup> The strength

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<sup>31</sup>The United States had a rating of 8.40, the UK at 5.0, West Germany at 2.3, France at 2.20, and Belgium at 1.25. Juan Gómez, *Cambio* 16, No. 877 (19 September 1988), 20.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>33</sup>Juan Díez Nicolás, "La Transición Política y la Opinión Pública ante los Problemas de La Defensa y hacia las Fuerzas Armadas," *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 36 (Oct/Dec 1986): 12-16

**Table VI: Poll on Spanish attitudes towards national defense**

	(In Percentages)		
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know/Care</u>
There is no value or ideal which would justify a war.....	70	20	10
In the event Morocco should try capture Spanish Ceuta and Melilla, Spain should respond including with the force of arms.....	28	53	19
Assuming that Spain was attacked militarily, the national territory should be defended through the use of arms.....	59	21	20
If the situation was really grave, the use of all types of weapons, including nuclear ones, should be used if necessary.....	09	44	47
Would you be willing to take up arms to defend Spain.....	30	21	49
The Spanish budget is insufficient to minimally guarantee the national security.....	16	49	36

SOURCE: Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas 36  
(Oct/Dec 1986): 20.

of these feelings are manifested in various ways. Foremost is the growing opposition against military conscription, or the "*mili*" as it is popularly called. Almost half (43 percent) of Spaniards questioned believe military service is a waste of time and unnecessary, and this percentage increases to over 60 percent in the 18-24 year old age bracket. Almost all agree that the twelve month service period is too long and should be reduced to a period between three and six months.<sup>34</sup>

The rejection of the "*mili*" is reinforced by the constant reports in the Spanish press of young Spaniards who die or commit suicide while doing military service.

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<sup>34</sup>Poll conducted for *Diario 16*, reported in *FBIS*, 3 July 1990, 24-29.

In 1988, for example, out of 257,000 youths drafted, there were 185 deaths, including 24 suicides, while 672 recruits suffered serious injury and an additional 109 attempted suicide. Between 1983 and 1989, 162 recruits actually committed suicide.<sup>35</sup> The government, in turn, argues that only a small percentage of these deaths or accidents can be attributed directly to military activities or causes, and Narcís Serra dismisses the suicide problem as "a problem of youth in general, not just of the armed forces."<sup>36</sup> Accompanying these statistics are the steady stream of horror reports, often sensationalist, of brutality, loneliness, and discomfort experienced by recruits. Not surprisingly, many young Spaniards spend their late teens plotting ways of deferring or obtaining an exemption from the draft. The number of youth declaring themselves conscientious objectors has doubled since 1986, and at the current rate will triple the 1986 amount by the end of 1990. At the same time, the government consistently fails to meet its volunteer enlistment targets. As of February 1990, the government's has only been able to recruit 8,000 volunteers to meet a 15,000 man requirement.<sup>37</sup> The decision to rely on forced recruits also has a detrimental effect on the motivation and "patriotism" of the average soldier. In one sample in the fall of 1985, only 32 percent of recruits declared themselves ready to die "to defend their country."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>*New York Times*, 6 October 1989.

<sup>36</sup>*FBIS*, 2 February 1989, 20.

<sup>37</sup>*El País*, 19 February 1990.

<sup>38</sup>Payne, "Modernization of the Armed Forces," 194.

The resistance to the draft has provoked a growing debate over the feasibility of eliminating compulsory military service in favor of a strictly professional force. Opposition parties during the 1989 elections capitalized on the issue, forcing the PSOE to react with the announcement of a reduction in service time from 12 to 9 months. But González and the Socialist continue to reject the notion of a totally professional force, despite the growing sentiment within the populace and in even the military for it.<sup>39</sup> The government defends conscription on the grounds that the formation of a fully professional army would add at least 40 percent to the current military budget. The government's fundamental objection, however, goes back to their goal of reducing and eliminating the separation between the military and society. A professional force, in their view, would create a semi-autonomous institution separate from society. Considering the history of the Spanish military, such an organization would be a potential danger to the democracy it is pledged to protect. Conscription at least maintains that link with society. As Serra stated:

I believe that it is very important that the basis of our Army be compulsory military service, in the process of making our country's defense a policy clearly linked to our society's needs and *ways of thinking*.<sup>40</sup>

Still, the continued reports of abuse of recruits, the growing resistance to the draft, the rising debate over the cost effectiveness of military expenditures, and

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<sup>39</sup>In the *Diario 16* more than half the officers questioned were in favor of a professional force, citing as one example, the disastrous performance in the Falklands War of the Argentine draftees, compared to the English professional soldiers. *FBIS*, 24 January 1989.

<sup>40</sup>*FBIS*, 31 March 1988, 14

the questioning of even the need for the armed forces indicates that the gulf between the civilian and military sectors, is not receding but widening, and that the government's position may be damaging the operational effectiveness of the armed forces.

The decision to reduce the period of service to nine months is one more example of the government's tendency to sacrifice military considerations for political necessity. It is widely acknowledged among military analysts that it is very difficult to train a modern soldier in a year's time; with the promised reduction to nine months it will be impossible. This decision will hurt above all the Army, which uses the largest percentage of conscripts. The Army Command concedes that with the current twelve month period of service, its manpower needs still falls short by 30,000 men and that it reaches (because of the induction schedule) its minimum operational readiness rate only three times a year; with the reduction to nine months this deficiency will remain permanent. Specialty units, such as the Parachute Brigade, which require long and intensive training cycles will be especially affected. In order to minimize these effects on operational readiness, the Defense Ministry is currently pursuing various options to lower manpower requirements and boost the number of special volunteers in the Army. The government hopes to raise the number of volunteers from its present eight percent of enlisted strength to over 30 percent. Nevertheless, both the Army and



the government are pessimistic; the Army has so far failed to achieve even their present goal of having 18 percent of the ranks in the form of volunteers.<sup>41</sup>

The almost excessive Spanish participation in international high technology weapons research projects is also probably inappropriate considering Spain's strategic requirements, modernization needs, and limited resources. A more efficient utilization of funds through the development or purchase of less exotic, proven, and reliable weapons systems would be more suited to the military's requirements. The PSOE government's focus, however, is more on long-term economic and political benefits than on military necessity. These projects bring prestige to Spain and assert Spain's claim of being a modern European country.

These considerations, combined with the dislocations caused by the Army reforms, the Army's general lack of adequate equipment, and the Defense Ministry's procurement focus, has led an army Colonel, Amadeo Martínez Inglés, to recently declare that the operational capability of the Army has fallen drastically under the Socialist government. His solution is to create a smaller, strictly professional Army. The Government's response was to sentence him to 14 days of house arrest for insubordination, effectively ending his career.

These problems do not detract from the contribution the Socialist government has made in reforming and redirecting the focus of the armed forces, it only suggests that the job is far from done and can even be improved. The Spanish armed forces are more capable today than 15 years ago. The fact that the

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<sup>41</sup>*El País*, 15 November 1990.

current debates revolve around readiness and capabilities issues rather than over the likelihood of a coup is proof that the Socialists have resolved their primary concern: the depoliticization of the armed forces. They have subordinated the military to the civilian government by law and organization, and they have contributed to the slow evolution of military attitudes away from interference in the political process. The clearest evidence is the poll conducted for *Tiempo* in November 1988. The poll shows that although many officers may dislike certain institutions or policies, a good majority of officers support the democracy and the Constitution. They overwhelmingly value the crown above other institutions, and have a higher opinion of González and the PSOE government than the civilian population at large. These positive feelings are even higher among the junior ranks.<sup>42</sup>

This does not guarantee that the military will never again threaten the political system. The same *Tiempo* poll revealed that 46 percent of the officers felt that "under certain circumstances the armed forces should take over the government of the nation."<sup>43</sup> But the real answer to whether the military will ever again challenge the political system will not be found within the military but within the Spanish political system. The eminent Spanish historian, Stanley Payne, has dismissed the military as a "paper tiger," even during the gloomiest days of the transition. In his historical analysis, notable acts of military intervention have

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<sup>42</sup>*FBIS*, 24 January 1989, 31-46.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

taken place only against relatively unpopular governments, against those that denied reasonable access to major national political sectors, or against those regimes facing severe internal division or breakdown. In his view, "major instances of intervention against a national consensus or a clear majority of public opinion have been rare to nonexistent."<sup>44</sup> If Payne's judgment is correct, only an extreme crisis or breakdown will produce a military challenge to the further development of Spanish democracy, and a crisis of that proportion appears highly unlikely within the foreseeable future. As long as Spanish democracy continues to enjoy sound leadership, reasonably effective government, public order, and the support of most of its citizens, it will be able to cultivate a military-societal relationship more resembling that found in other parts of the North Atlantic world.

The Socialists can take substantial credit for these developments. One can debate the appropriateness of certain strategies, but one must recognize that through good leadership, clear policy objectives, and a deft handling of its relationship with the armed forces, the Socialist government has succeeded in reforming and redirecting the military's energies toward their rightful constitutional role.

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<sup>44</sup>Stanley Payne, "The Role of the Armed Forces in the Spanish Transition," in *Spain in the 1980s: The Democratic Transition and a New International Role*, ed. Michael Hatzel and Robert Clark (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987), 85.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

The NATO Referendum campaign discussed in Chapter Two provided an excellent example of the problems faced by the González government in formulating Spanish defense policy. The Referendum ended the polemics on Spain's membership in NATO, but it did not silence the NATO opponents. Their efforts now concentrated on ensuring the government's strict adherence to the referendum conditions and the other promises made during the referendum campaign. The two main issues revolved around the U.S. bases renegotiations and the Spanish form of participation in the Western Alliance. Again, domestic political pressures would determine the course of Spanish defense policy; again Felipe González's predicament remained the same -- striking that delicate balance between remaining responsive to the anti-American, anti-nuclear, and anti-militarist sentiments of many Spaniards (many of whom thrive within his party), and meeting his obligations and personal commitment to a pro-American, nuclear, military alliance.

### **The U.S. Bases Rights Issue**

The impact of the U.S. relationship to Franco has already been mentioned. General Francisco Franco's regime emerged from the wake of the Second World War isolated from the international community. Spain's pariah status and dependence on autarkic economic policies soon led to an economic crisis that by

1950 endangered the very basis of Franco's regime. Franco was desperate for outside aid and recognition, and as in 1936-39, international developments were soon working in his favor. The outbreak of the Cold War made Franco's anti-Communist credentials and Spain's geo-strategic position more important than its quasi-Fascist nature. The Pentagon became eager to secure the military advantages Spain had to offer: a natural fallback position behind the Pyrenees; control over western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic shipping lanes and a natural staging ground for tactical deployment of aircraft. Despite President Truman's strong repugnance to Franco, he was eventually convinced by the Defense Department of the need to "assure to the United States and its allies military accessibility to and military cooperation with Spain."<sup>1</sup> President Eisenhower's assumption of office in 1953 and his more enthusiastic attitude toward the project, provided the final push in concluding the first Executive agreements, known as the Madrid pact, on September 26, 1953.

Franco's eagerness for an agreement did not lessen the difficulties in the negotiations. Franco wanted more than a mere "landlord-tenant" relationship; he wanted a close political and military alliance with the United States, not as an end, but as a means of securing Western acceptance and international respectability. He also wanted as much economic and military aid as he could acquire. The final agreement fell short of Franco's desires. He simply did not have the

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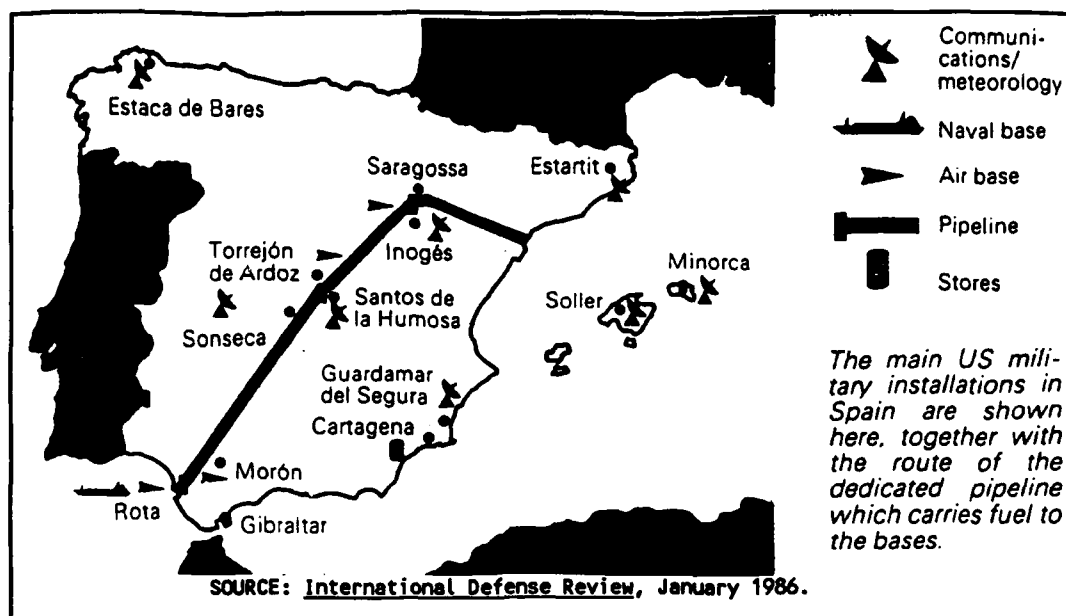
<sup>1</sup>Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, May 1950, cited in William Habeeb, *Power and Tactics in International Negotiation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 77.

"issue power advantage" necessary to secure a favorable outcome in the negotiations and the United States made sure to minimize any firm commitments to the Dictator.<sup>2</sup> He did gain enough economic aid to overcome his temporary crisis and establish a basis for further economic growth. American aid and the very presence of U.S. forces in Spain also equated to a substantial degree of international acceptance. Hence the 1953 agreements were a milestone in 20th century Spanish history: Spain became effectively incorporated into the military defense system of the West; Spain's isolation and her status as a neutral power were ended. Yet this development also provided the basis for future political discord within Spain. Franco's alliance with the United States was not done out of any response to real or imaginary defense requirements. On the contrary, long-held Spanish domestic perceptions about their nation's role in Europe and in the World were now overturned for political and economic expediency.

The Pact gave the U.S. substantial rights to build three air bases (at Zaragoza, Torrejón de Ardoz, and Morón), a naval base (at Rota), a 485-mile jet fuel pipeline (from Rota to Torrejón and Zaragoza), and many other communications and smaller facilities throughout Spain (Figure 7). The quality and quantity of facilities and concessions obtained by the U.S. clearly showed Franco's weakness. Many Spaniards, including ultra-nationalists within the regime, were resentful, claiming that the Spain had given away too much and was receiving far too

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<sup>2</sup>William Habeeb has an interesting discussion of the 1951-76 U.S-Spanish base negotiations in the context of asymmetrical negotiations in international relations, in *Power and Tactics in International Relations*, 75-99.



**Figure 7: U.S. military installations in Spain**

little in return.

Despite these criticisms, the bilateral agreements did bring a much needed infusion of capital to a tottering Spanish economy. American money, in terms of direct aid, or in the construction and operation of the bases, greatly stimulated the Spanish economy. The \$300 million provided for the construction of the bases between 1954-57 was greater than the sum of Spanish foreign reserves during the same three year period and close to 30,000 jobs for Spanish laborers and contractors were created.<sup>3</sup> Loans from private American sources and from the Export-Import Bank allowed the purchase of much needed grain in the early 1950s and helped to stabilize the peseta. These infusions helped Franco to overcome his temporary economic crisis. Long-term economic stability was

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Chavkin, Jack Sangster, and William Susman, ed., *Spain: Implications for United States Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Greylock Publishers, 1976), 32.

assured more by the fundamental changes in economic policy that were taken in the following years. In the late 1950s, Spain broke away from the policies of autarky and developed a dynamic free market policy that laid the basis for Spain's economic "miracle" in the next decade. Nevertheless, these developments would not have been possible without the ending of Spain's isolation in 1953 and the pressure of the United States on its allies to normalize relations with Spain. For these reasons it has often been charged that the U.S. kept Franco in power.

Whether Franco could have survived without U.S. assistance is unknown, but what is certain is that over a 25 year period (1951-1975), the U.S. provided \$3 billion to build and operate the bases; \$2.2 billion to equip, train, and support the Spanish military; and \$1.8 billion to support the Spanish economy. This equated to over \$7 billion in total aid and operation costs.<sup>4</sup> It is an impressive figure by any standard and combined with the U.S. political support, surely eased Franco's hold on power.

To gain the bases, however, Franco was forced to relinquish certain aspects of national sovereignty; but he was determined to hide it. He insisted that the bases be jointly used, and that they remain under Spanish flag and command. The tricky question of the use of the bases in wartime was also left open, at least publicly. Article III of the Mutual defense clause stated that, "the time and manner of wartime utilization of said areas and facilities will be as mutually

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 32.



agreed upon."<sup>5</sup> Franco downplayed any mention of the introduction and storage of nuclear weapons on Spanish soil, though the airfields were built to support the nuclear capable bombers of the Strategic Air Command. Ergo the furious Spanish reaction in 1953 when the visiting U.S. Secretary of the Air Force remarked to the press that the U.S. would stock its bases with atomic bombs. Senior administration officials were forced quickly to correct his statement and declare that the U.S. had no plans to store atomic weapons in Spain.<sup>6</sup>

Despite Franco's efforts to paint the best light on the accords, secret clauses in the agreements granted the United States considerable freedom of action. A secret annex to Article III of the Mutual Assistance Pact stated that, in the event of "evident Communist aggression that threatens the security of the West" the U.S. could use zones and installations in Spanish territories as bases against Communist military objectives. The only condition stipulated was the immediate rendering to Spain of any pertinent information and a declaration of U.S. intentions. This clause in the opinion of Spanish historians gave the U.S. a blank check to use the bases in any situation that fulfilled its ambiguous terms; on the other hand, Spain was not guaranteed assistance from the United States if attacked.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Spain could have been drawn into an East-West conflict

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<sup>5</sup>Ángel Viñas, *Los Pactos Secretos de Franco con Estados Unidos* (Barcelona: Colección/80, 1981), 192.

<sup>6</sup>Theodore J. Lowi, "U.S. Bases in Spain," unpublished monograph, November, 1961, The Inter-University Case Program, New York City.

<sup>7</sup>Viñas, *Los Pactos Secretos*, 196-202.

(particularly a nuclear conflict) without a guarantee of support for reprisals against its territory. Neither did the Treaty promise support against threats emanating from the Magreb. The fact that the bases were put on alert during crises over Cuba (1962) and in the Middle East (1973), though Spain was not directly involved, further convinced many that the Pact endangered Spain more than it protected her.

The secret clause was abrogated during the renegotiations in 1970s, and further improvements in Spain's position were realized in subsequent years, still the fundamental imbalance of obligations remained intact throughout the period of the dictatorship. What Franco could not hide, was the agreement to exempt U.S. forces from the provisions of the Spanish criminal code. This was seen as a direct surrendering of national sovereignty and was bitterly resented by both the Spanish bureaucracy and the population.<sup>8</sup>

The subsequent renegotiations of the agreements in 1963, 1968, and 1970 replayed the essential aims of both parties during the 1953 deliberations. Franco strove to extract a concrete military and political commitment from the United States and a maximum amount of assistance funds; the U.S. attempted to maintain the original formula. The U.S. sought to incorporate Spain within the NATO alliance but allied distaste of Franco doomed the prospect. Alone, the U.S. was reluctant to tie itself to the Dictator's defense, especially since such a commitment would require signing a treaty with Senate confirmation. As a result, various

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<sup>8</sup>Angel Viñas, "Spain and NATO," 164.

formulas were reached increasing the amount of assistance, rent, and tightening the language in the mutual defense clauses (yet maintaining the vagueness required to avoid the need for a formal pact).<sup>9</sup> It was only in 1976, after the death of Franco, that the U.S. moved to place the relationship under a treaty of friendship and cooperation.

The 1976 Treaty did not change the basic formula that had existed since 1953. It was only with the renegotiation of the Treaty in 1982 that Spain succeeded in redressing the imbalances and regaining many of her rights conceded during the Franco years. The 1982 agreement, negotiated by the center-right government of the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD), but not ratified until after the election of the Socialist government of Felipe González, gave greater control of the facilities and its activities (particularly over the American penchant to use the bases for "out of area" operations) to Spain. It explicitly spelled out in detail the operations of both installations and treaty mechanisms to avoid misinterpretation. A new accord placing U.S. forces under a status of forces agreement, comparable to what the U.S. has with its other NATO allies, finally eliminated U.S. servicemen's exclusion from Spanish law. Spain's stronger bargaining power in 1982 was as a result of its successful application to join NATO. NATO membership helped overcome many of the difficulties of previous negotiations.

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<sup>9</sup>In 1963 it was agreed that an attack on the other would be "a matter of common concern," in 1970 both countries pledged that "each government will support the defense system of the other." Cited in Habeeb, *Power and Tactics*, 92.

By 1982, Spain had corrected many imbalances of the original 1953 Pact. Yet the usual heightened controversy concerning the negotiations and their result was now submerged by the growing uproar over the UCD government's decision to enter NATO and the Socialist victory in October 1982. The status of the U.S. bases would now be consumed in the general debate of Spain's role in NATO and in the world.

### **The External Pressures**

In preparation for the NATO referendum, Spain first approached the United States in May 1985 about the need to open new talks to reduce the number of military personnel attached to the American bases, and the possibility of closing down one or more them. The U.S. acceptance in principle set the stage for the first big misunderstanding between the two parties. Spanish diplomats believed that Washington had accepted a two-way commitment: González would make a maximum effort to deliver a "yes" vote and Washington would give something in return.<sup>10</sup> Upon the successful conclusion of the NATO referendum and the June 1986 elections, formal talks began in July 1986 to renew the accords scheduled to expire in May 1988. González wanted to renew the Treaty, despite their unpopularity, for two main reasons: first, González wanted to maintain his cordial relationship with Washington, with its attendant advantages; secondly, and

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<sup>10</sup>Richard Wigg, "Spain: Europeanism in place of Socialism," *The World Today* 44 (July 1988): 117.

more importantly, the bases were the clearest evidence of Spain's contribution to the Atlantic Alliance, a contribution often maligned externally for its ambiguous nature. Nevertheless, González needed a major concession from the U.S. to meet his domestic political obligations. Spain thus opened the negotiations by demanding from the start the withdrawal of the F-16 Wing at Torrejón as a condition for the continuation of the American presence in Spain. The second misunderstanding now arose. The U.S. negotiators took the Spanish position as an opening negotiating stance, rather than a firm conviction. Whereas the Spanish government had in the words of one analyst,

chosen a point of departure in the negotiating process, which had the virtue of being totally reasonable, but also the inconvenience -- for the United States -- of fixing the *final* objective of the negotiations, a minimum, maximum, and unrenounceable ceiling: the removal of the squadron from Torrejón de Ardoz.<sup>11</sup>

The rejection of this demand angered the Spanish government. They saw it, not only as the least concession needed to save González's credibility, but as a betrayal of what appeared an implicit deal. Negotiations soon turned sour, as the U.S. progressively put forth counter-offers that were, in Spain's view, insufficient. The U.S. offered to remove the 16th Air Force's Headquarters from Torrejón, to "hispanize" as much as possible the functions and obligations of the bases, and to remove the squadron to a less visible place, such as Rota. The Spanish inflexibility, in turn, infuriated the Americans. As one American official

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<sup>11</sup>Pere Vilanova, "La Política de Defensa de España y Francia," *Leviatán* 34 (Winter 1988): 31.

complained in late 1987, "their position has not changed since July 1986. That's not negotiating."<sup>12</sup>

To force a Spanish reconsideration, the U.S. adopted several distinct ploys that only proved counterproductive. The U.S. let it be known that it was considering moving the F-16 squadron to Morocco, Spain's uneasy neighbor to the South. The move was designed to "raise hairs," but Spanish analysts quickly dismissed the possibility due to the practical and political costs of such a relocation.<sup>13</sup> The Spanish also became incensed by the attempts of the U.S. government to appeal directly to King Juan Carlos for assistance; the maneuver was considered an insult to the elected Spanish government. No more effective was the effort to gain the support of the NATO allies in the dispute. In funding Fiscal 1988 military activities, the U.S. Congress prohibited expenditures "for planning, design or construction of military facilities or family housing" to support relocation of the 401st "from Spain to another country."<sup>14</sup> The message was clear: either the Wing stayed in Spain or the Allies would have to pick up the costs for its relocation; otherwise, NATO would lose the aircraft. The Allies agreed with the United States about the importance of the F-16s to Western Defense, and even President Mitterrand reminded President González during a visit in March 1987, that the impending Euromissile (INF) deal between the Soviet Union and

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<sup>12</sup>*New York Times*, 4 October 1987.

<sup>13</sup>*Cambio 16*, No.836 (7 December 1987), 26-27.

<sup>14</sup>Michael Meham, "U.S Asks NATO to Relocate Air Wing," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 25 January 1988, 22.

the United States would make the Alliance more dependent on those assets that the United States wanted to keep in Spain. Yet Congress' threat was still not enough to force the Europeans to pressure the González government strongly. The Europeans generally favored a more conciliatory attitude toward Spain. In their view, the best way of encouraging Spain to become a better ally was to hold her hand instead of twisting her arm.

At the core of the matter were differing notions of the nature of the U.S.-Spanish relationship. The U.S. insisted that the forces in Spain were committed to NATO missions, therefore any reductions in U.S. forces would have to be negotiated within the NATO context and any loss of capabilities would have to be compensated by Spanish forces (thereby forcing the Spaniards to take a more active role in the Alliance). González rejected both these conclusions. He asserted the bilateral nature of the agreements and refused Spain's assumption of the F-16's duties. In this position González had the support of the NATO Secretary General, Lord Carrington. Carrington enigmatically agreed that the issue was strictly bilateral, albeit the aircraft were conducting NATO tasks.<sup>15</sup> González could further defend his position by pointing out that, U.S. Air Force activities in the past appeared more oriented toward fulfilling U.S. foreign policy objectives than NATO requirements. The aircraft were not there to defend Spain, and would move elsewhere during a conflict, and that conflict would most likely be against opponents other than the Soviet Union, in a theater other than Europe. Even in

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<sup>15</sup>FBIS, July 24, 1987, L1.

their NATO roles of providing for the forward defense of the Southern Flank in Italy and in Turkey, Spanish stipulations against integration in NATO's command structure or in serving in areas not directly in its areas of strategic interests would preclude taking on the Wing's duties.

The Spanish stubbornness on the F-16 issue had more to do with internal pressures, but there were other considerations as well. Spain did not want to extend the existing treaties, she wanted to establish a new relationship that threw off the last vestiges of the Franco arrangements and reflected her status as a bonafide NATO member. Spain's presence in the Alliance and the modernization of her forces meant that her contribution to Western security would no longer just be passive, "by offering her territory, but active, coordinating her defensive capacities with Alliance plans."<sup>16</sup> Therefore by bringing into the Alliance increased and steadily improving capabilities, Spain argued that the need for the same amount of permanently stationed American forces was considerably reduced.

The U.S. had doubts over Spain's technical capability of assuming the F-16's missions, even after the completion of fielding their recently purchased wing of 72 F-18 Fighters. Nonetheless, it was hoped this demand would force Spain to play a more meaningful role in Alliance defense. Behind the U.S. position, more importantly perhaps, was the fear that even a limited withdrawal from Spanish bases could provoke calls for similar withdrawals elsewhere, most notably in Greece. The Bases were important and useful, but not vital. If they were lost,

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<sup>16</sup>Narcís Serra, "La Política Española de Defensa," 187.



their individual missions could still be carried out, though with some difficulties and increased costs, provided that the U.S. retained access to other bases in the area, especially those in the Azores and in Italy. An indirect cost of losing the Spanish bases would be to increase dependence on bases in other countries.

The bases are also less valuable than they might be otherwise, because their use for purposes beyond NATO (which has been the more likely scenario) is seriously constrained. The stated missions of the bases have always included, not only the Mediterranean, but the Middle East.<sup>17</sup> Yet the Spanish Government has always been reluctant about being identified with U.S. policies, particularly if it may damage its long-standing friendly ties with the Arab states. As a result, Spain has repeatedly denied the U.S. the use of the facilities during times of crisis in the Middle East. In 1967 Spain only granted the use of the facilities for evacuating American citizens; in 1973 Spain denied the use of the bases for either supporting or refueling U.S. aircraft bound for Israel; in 1979 it delayed granting refuelling permission for U.S. F-15s bound for Saudi Arabia during the Iranian crisis. By 1982, the base accords categorically rejected the use of the bases for other than NATO purposes unless it was approved by the Spanish government. A more recent example was the denial of the use of Spanish airspace during the Libyan raid in 1986.

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<sup>17</sup>Some of the objectives stated are, "to support friendly states outside NATO, particularly Israel; to deny the Soviet Union use of the Suez Canal in time of war." Cited from a Congressional Study in Georges Minet, Jean Siotis, and Panos Tsakaloyannis, *The Mediterranean Challenge: Spain, Greece and Community Politics* (Sussex: Sussex European Research Centre, 1981), 31.

The U.S. efforts to change the Spanish government's attitude toward the F-16s failed. Indeed, it probably only served to bolster the González government, by rallying Spanish public opinion behind it. There is nothing guaranteed to boost the popularity of a Spanish government than the image of it bravely resisting American pressure. After seven negotiation sessions and 18 months, the United States faced the alternative of either accepting the Spanish demands or risking the loss of all its installations in Spain, if the Spanish complied with their threat to not renew the Treaty. The U.S. was left with no other choice but to accede to the Spanish demands. By January 15, 1988, a new framework for defense cooperation was worked out. The U.S. agreed to withdraw the 401st TFW within 3 years. In return, the U.S. received a longer term of eight years for the agreements, access to Torrejón during a NATO crisis, and use of the remaining bases and facilities. More importantly, in an apparent effort to answer symbolically her critics and place herself among the stature of other NATO states (such as, Great Britain, West Germany, and Italy), Spain agreed to forego any monetary compensation for the Bases.<sup>18</sup> The González government was jubilant. It had achieved its objective: the fulfillment of the promise outlined in the NATO Referendum and a new relationship with the United States.

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<sup>18</sup>The Spanish government may have also been persuaded to do without U.S. aid due to the dissatisfaction it has had with previous U.S. aid programs, particularly in the military and security assistance funds. See "U.S. Political-Military Relations with Allies in Southern Europe," *Report of a Staff Study Mission to Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey, Oct 15-30 1986*, Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987).

The details of the final agreement that was signed in December 1988 were worked out quickly and uneventfully, except for the touchy subject of nuclear weapons. The Spanish wanted the text of the agreement to ban explicitly the "introduction" of nuclear weapons on Spanish Territory, so that it would better reflect the NATO Referendum pledge and Spain's status as a "non-nuclear" country; the 1982 agreements had prohibited only the "storage" and "transport." Official U.S. policy is to neither confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships and aircraft. For years U.S. warships and planes had visited Spain without inspections or questions about their cargo. The language of the Referendum, and a world-wide wave of anti-nuclear sentiment now changed the atmosphere of the negotiations. In 1985 the New Zealand government set a precedent by forbidding nuclear weapons to enter its ports and began to ask the captains of U.S. warships about the type of weapons carried aboard.

Regardless, González could not force this issue. Spain's membership in NATO and the on-going negotiations to join the West European Union (WEU), meant that she would have to accept NATO's nuclear strategy. A compromise was worked out where the U.S. accepted Spain's version of the text, while Spain agreed in writing to renounce its right to inspect ships in port or aircraft on stops. This compromise sparked a wave of criticism within Spain. A poll taken at the time showed a majority of the Spanish people saw the agreement as an

abandonment of González's referendum promise.<sup>19</sup> As the Communist Party leader vividly decried,

The Treaty is ridiculous, shameful, and a piece of buffoonery ... when a government renounces checking foreign ships, it might as well haul down the Spanish flag.<sup>20</sup>

The reaction to the government's action was typical of the endemic atmosphere and sensitivities throughout the negotiations, and it points to the one dimension that had dictated the course of the NATO Referendum, and that continued to be the motor for Spain's hard negotiating stance -- domestic politics.

### **The Internal Dynamics**

It is apparent from the conduct of the negotiations that the United States never understood the importance that the Spanish government gave to the Torrejón issue, or of the role domestic politics plays in Spanish foreign and defense policy. As one author put it, "Spanish choices in foreign policy will be made not according to some abstract calculation of national interest, but will emerge, rather, from the hurly-burly of domestic politics."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Mariano Aguirre, "The U.S. Finds a Treatment," *The Nation* 247 (December 26, 1988): 723.

<sup>20</sup>"Nuclear Loophole in U.S.-Spanish Treaty Cited," *FBIS*, September 4, 1988, 33.

<sup>21</sup>Gary Treverton, *Spain: Domestic Politics and Security Policy*, Adelphi Papers No. 204 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1986), 5.

The decision to seek a reduction in the American forces in Spain was a widely popular proposition indicated consistently by various polls. In surveys conducted by the Spanish Government's own Center for Sociological Research, it was shown that 56 percent of Spaniards rejected the presence of U.S. bases on Spanish soil, eclipsing even the percentage of those opposed to NATO membership (48 percent), and this with 33 percent of the respondents not even answering the question! Other sources reported that only 1 in five thought America should keep facilities on their soil.<sup>22</sup> One measure of the pervasiveness of the anti-base sentiment in Spain, and contrary to what would be expected from a comparable American situation, is that even in the communities that benefit the most economically from the U.S. presence, there was no overwhelming cry favoring keeping the bases. Excepting a few business people catering directly to Americans, the town of Torrejón favored shutting down the Air Base, and its town council passed a resolution to that effect. The Socialist-led Council of Zaragoza also asked the national government to negotiate the removal of the nearby base.<sup>23</sup> Only in the less developed south, where Rota and Morón were located, was there a more favorable opinion toward the bases.

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<sup>22</sup>Díez Nicolás, *La Transición Política y la Opinión Pública Española*, 17; Janice Valls-Russell, "Madrid's Delicate Dance," *The New Leader* 71 (21 March 1988): 9.

<sup>23</sup>*New York Times*, 24 January 1988. Those Spaniards that worked on the base will probably retain their jobs as the Government intends to make Torrejón the most important installation of the Spanish Air Force; those hoping for quieter skies will certainly be disappointed. See *Armed Forces Journal International*, June 1988, 28.

Once the NATO Referendum was successfully concluded and as the 1982 accords neared time for renegotiation, the pressure to fulfill the promise of the NATO referendum increased. Just as González had been compelled by moral and political considerations to fulfill his promise on the NATO referendum (despite the misgivings of many of his advisers), so he felt that he needed to obtain a sizeable, and not merely a "cosmetic" reduction in the American presence. González had, after all, always striven to maintain an image of progressivism and honesty (González's campaign biography in 1981 was even entitled *Un Estilo Ético*). Just as in the NATO Referendum, González had to reach a formula within the base issue that would satisfy his promise yet maintain his relationship with the U.S. and provide a sufficient contribution to NATO. A reduction in U.S. forces was not a simple proposition. The U.S. forces in Spain are somewhat small, numbering roughly around 12,500. By nature, they are highly technical and specialized, working in Air and Naval bases, or in specialized maintenance or communications facilities. A strictly numerical reduction could not feasibly be done, nor would it have a sufficient symbolic value. The F-16 wing at Torrejón was the ideal target. It was in the largest of the U.S. Air Force's installations in Spain and it was the most prominent (being only 11 miles northwest from Madrid). Torrejón houses not only the 72 F-16s of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing, but also the Headquarters of the 16th Tactical Air Force, responsible for controlling all the U.S. Air Force units around the Mediterranean. If the Wing was forced to leave, the 401st Headquarters would probably leave as well (without

even having to bring it to the negotiating table). The presence of the Americans there has also often been criticized for exposing the capital to total destruction in the event of a global conflict.

Nevertheless, the decision to oust the wing from Torrejón was not supported within the Spanish Military.<sup>24</sup> Military advisers reminded the government that Spain still lacked the resources to adequately defend itself or honor its commitments to its allies. As one Air Force officer wrote,

The backbone of the Air Force in the decade to come will consist exclusively of 72 F-18s and a further 72 F-1s. This is from every point of view an insufficient number of aircraft with which to exercise control of the air over not only the National Strategic Space but also the Canary Islands-Gibraltar Strait-Balearic Islands triangle. This means that our air strength will cease to satisfy one of its main tasks, namely to constitute the principal element of our deterrent capability.<sup>25</sup>

The Air Force estimated that Spain would need a minimum of 240-280 fighter aircraft and would possess only half that number by 1990. Though the U.S. wing was not envisioned to assist Spain in any African conflict, their mere presence still served as a deterrent to any southern challenger. The Defense Ministry also calculated that Spain would have to pay between eight and ten billion pesetas a year to cover the defense requirements arising from the reduction of U.S. forces in the country.<sup>26</sup> The Spanish government would have to take over some of the

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<sup>24</sup>A Poll commissioned and published in November 1988 by *Tiempo* showed that 49 percent of officers disagreed with the government's actions and firmly supported keeping the American bases in Spain. *FBIS*, 24 January 1989, 44.

<sup>25</sup>Lt. Col. Sánchez Mendez in *Revista de Aeronautica*, quoted in *FBIS*, 30 March 1987, N2.

<sup>26</sup>*FBIS*, 7 January 1987, N1.

expenditures made by the U.S., as some of the installations would have to remain functioning. Therefore, the military and the Defense Ministry urged González to consider the serious consequences of the removal of the fighter wing to national security, but again political considerations took priority.

As the negotiations began in earnest in 1987, the need to gain this exact outcome became even more imperative, regardless of the military cost. The Socialists needed an important accomplishment to bolster the sagging popularity of the government following the "Hot Spring" of 1987. In March 1987, some eight months after President González began his second term of office, opinion polls revealed that support for the PSOE had reached an all-time low, with only a 25 percent approval rating.<sup>27</sup> Particularly during the first part of the year, but throughout 1987, protest against the government's economic policies had reached unprecedented levels. Widespread strikes and demonstrations (often turning violent), involving a broad cross-section of the population became commonplace. Further damage to the government was caused by accusations of corruption within the PSOE and an upsurge in attacks by ETA terrorists. The results of the triple elections of 10 June 1987 (local, regional, and for the first time, European) showed the growing Socialist vulnerability. In the elections, the PSOE lost over a million votes compared to the 1986 election figures, and for the first time since its

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<sup>27</sup>Benny Pollack and Graham Hunter, "Spanish Democracy After Four General Elections," *Parliamentary Affairs* 40 (July 1987): 372.



sweep to power in 1982, the PSOE vote share fell below 40 percent.<sup>28</sup> These events served, as the year progressed, to heighten the impression that there was a groundswell of reaction gaining momentum against the government. In such an atmosphere, the Socialists were intent on not backing down from their demands for a sizeable and visible reduction in the American presence. In their view, any compromise would be an admission of weakness that could inflict a mortal blow to the Socialist government's declining fortunes.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, a firm stance against the Americans could only bring positive domestic political results, particularly if the government was seen as bravely resisting American coercion.

Pressure to fulfill the referendum promise was also building in rival political parties and even within the PSOE. Throughout 1987, as the negotiations proceeded, mass demonstrations against the bases were regularly organized by the Communists and other leftist parties of the umbrella "United Left" organization; their intensity and size increased as the Americans appeared more unwilling to give in. But the greater political threat came from Adolfo Suárez, leader of the nationalist center-left Union of the Democratic Center (CDS) Party. Suárez, credited, as Prime Minister, for the smooth transition to democracy in Spain, challenged the Socialists by calling the removal of all the American bases in the

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<sup>28</sup>Paul Heywood, "Spain: 10 June 1987," *Government and Opposition* 22 (Autumn 1987): 391.

<sup>29</sup>*New York Times*, 4 October 1987.

CDS's 1986 and 1987 campaign platforms.<sup>30</sup> Although the CDS was and remains a minor party, Adolfo Suárez is a popular and charismatic figure in the González mode, and was seen by 1987 as the only politician that could compete one-on-one with González at the national level. Therefore his more radical stance on the base issue was especially noted by González and his advisors.

Pressure was also coming from within the PSOE. González's change of mind on NATO still had not become prevalent among his party's rank-in-file. After years of anti-American rhetoric in the 1970s and following the anti-NATO campaign of 1982, it did not appear that the party's members had reciprocated the leadership's *giro* (U-turn) on Alliance participation. More likely it had been, as one observer wrote, that,

The change in attitudes is due to tactical temporary reasons and not to a process of doctrinary evolution vis-à-vis Western values. As a consequence, this change is not being made with conviction, but with resignation -- by people who are ready to change their minds again in the opposite direction, were socialist interests to demand it.<sup>31</sup>

It is exactly this lingering sentiment that the government threatened to tap into as the November 1987 deadline in the negotiations approached without an agreement by the U.S. to concede the wing's withdrawal from Torrejón. Foreign Ministry officials warned that the government was prepared to use the "trump card" of "anti-Americanism" if the United States did not yield to Spain's

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<sup>30</sup>Richard Wigg, "Spain: Europeanism in Place of Socialism," *The World Today* 44 (Jul 1988): 117.

<sup>31</sup>Antxon Sarasqueta, "Spanish Opinion and the West," *Survey* 29 (No.126): 45.

demands.<sup>32</sup> The pressure to fulfill not only the promises of the Referendum but to exceed them by removing all the bases from Spain, was being championed by the left wing faction of the PSOE called the *Izquierda Socialista* (Socialist Left), led by Pablo Castellano. Castellano was highly critical of not only the government's right-wing economic policies, but its stance on the NATO question, and by extension, its position on the U.S. bases. Castellano blamed the PSOE's fall in the 1987 elections as the direct result of the abandonment by the González government of the party's traditional positions on domestic and international issues.<sup>33</sup> Yet the internal challenge of Castellano and his group on this point, as during the NATO campaign, proved ineffectual. Castellano was forced to leave the party on October 1987. González's control over the party remained unassailable.

The importance of the domestic political environment is again evident in the case of the U.S. bases. The González government was determined to modify the bases arrangement in order to rid it of its linkage with Spain's authoritarian past and to reflect Spain's new status as a NATO member. The government's decision to stop accepting U.S. assistance in return for the bases must be seen in this light. Still, the González government would have probably desired more flexi-

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<sup>32</sup>"Firm Line Confirmed at U.S. Bases Talks," *FBIS*, 24 July, 1987, L1.

<sup>33</sup>The PSOE's consistent stated objective prior to 1981 was the "total elimination of foreign bases on our national territory." Although they tactically changed their position to challenge the UCD's NATO decision. Taken from the Resolutions of the 29th Party Congress, October 1981, in Celestino del Arenal and Francisco Aldecoa, ed., *España y la OTAN: Textos y Documentos* (Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 1986), 312.

bility in the negotiations. Domestic political pressure made that impossible. The government was forced to take a firm stance even if it meant playing "brinkmanship" with the bases and risking the wrath of its NATO partners, or damaging its defense posture. Seen from another perspective, the deteriorating domestic political situation in 1987, caused the domestic political benefits of an unyielding position to far outweigh any potential costs in the international or security realm. In the case of the bases, the government was willing to succumb to popular demand for the sake of its prior pledge in the Referendum and its popular appeal, but as the next case will show, the government was also willing to stretch the limits of its referendum promises for the greater goal of enhancing Spain's importance in Europe.

### **Spain and Western Defense**

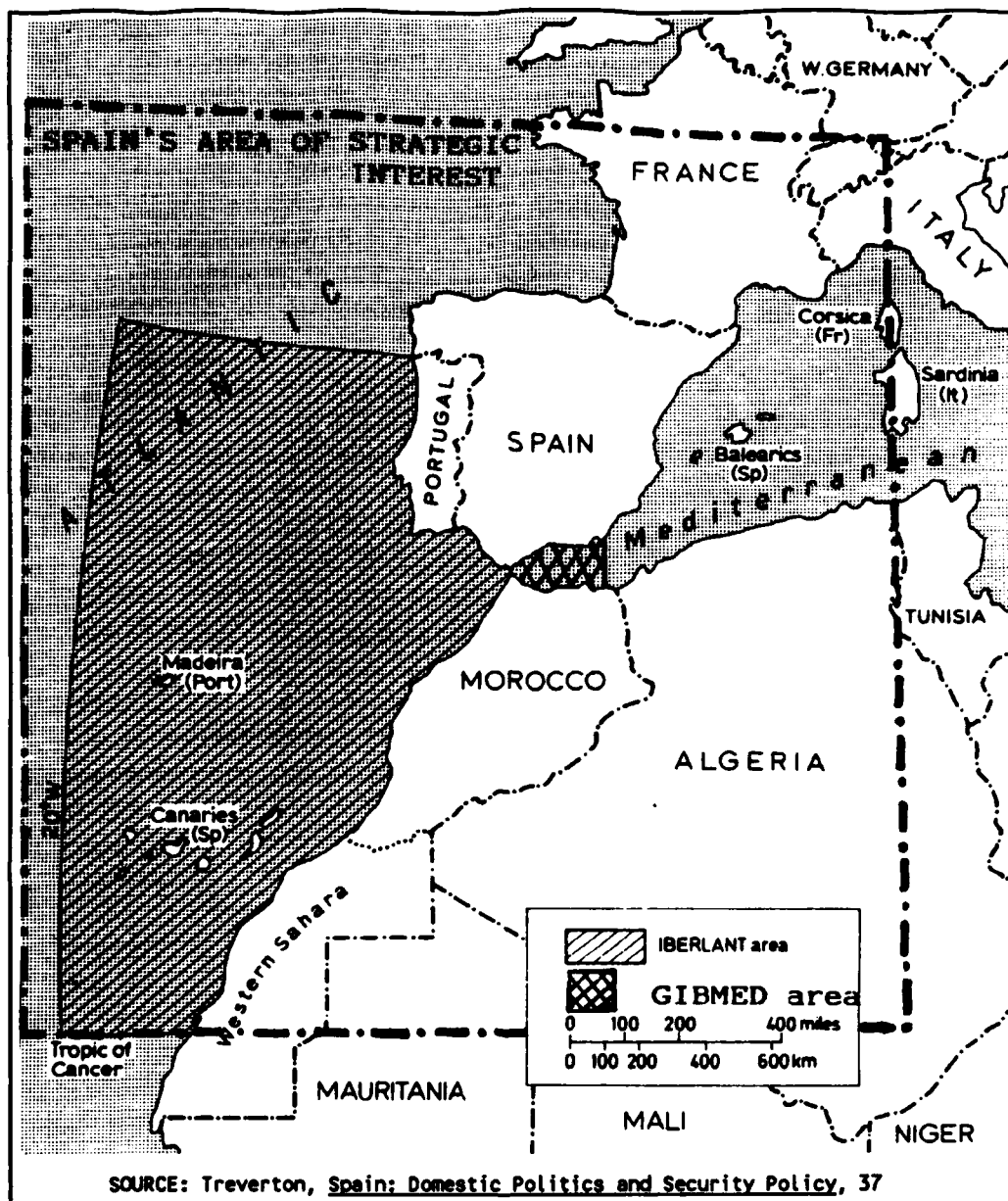
After the 1986 Referendum the Spanish government immediately began a series of contacts to decide the exact form of Spanish participation in NATO. The clear aim of the Socialist government was to define a position which would maintain the three conditions of the Referendum, yet mitigate the effects of remaining outside the military structure. The deeper underlying objective was to ensure Spain's participation in the European defense structure, even if it meant stretching the limits in the interpretations of the NATO Referendum.

The main problem centered on the second clause of the March 1986 Referendum: nonparticipation in the integrated military structure. The expression "integrated military structure" does not appear in any official text of the Atlantic Alliance, although it does appear in some organizational documents. The only prior precedent to this form of participation was set by France, which withdrew from NATO's military organization in 1966. At that time, to retain a political link between France and the Alliance, the Atlantic Council was established to seat senior political representatives from the member states. The meeting of the defense representatives became the Defense Planning Committee and it has not included a French representative for over 24 years.

Spain could not completely follow the French example; she did not have either France's resources or independent nuclear capability, and she perceived greater threats to her national security. Hence Spain's participation in NATO became more extensive. The Spanish government, even before the Referendum took a very narrow interpretation of the non-integration proviso. In their view, remaining outside NATO's integrated structure, meant not assigning Spanish forces to NATO commands. So long as Spanish forces did not have to take orders from NATO military commanders, the government felt it had fulfilled its pledge. Such an interpretation, made a broad range of activities possible. Therefore, after the Referendum, Spain quickly moved to settle her mode of participation, which had remained in a provisional status since the arrival Socialist government. Spain agreed to participate fully in the Atlantic Council, the Defense Planning

Committee (DPC), the Nuclear Planning Group, the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization, and many other NATO committees and bodies. Spain also established a permanent military mission (which even France does not maintain) at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), as a liaison between the Spanish Armed Forces and NATO. Spain additionally provided officers to work in NATO's International Staff. Beginning with the final completion of the various coordination agreements in 1990, Spain will also contribute financially in all three NATO budgets -- the Civil and Military budgets and the Infrastructure Program.

A much more difficult task has been trying to reconcile a military contribution from Spain, that does not violate her domestic obligations, or upset long established command arrangements. Spain's self-stated area of strategic interest clashes head on with two NATO commands: IBERLANT, which is a subordinate command of Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT), and is commanded by a Portuguese Admiral; and GIBMED, which is a British command headquartered in Gibraltar (Figure 8 below). Spain, because of her claims to Gibraltar, refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of GIBMED, while political sensitivities prevent displacing the Portuguese from the command of IBERLANT (even though it no longer makes military sense). In any event, Spain's position of non-integration in the Command structure dashed the Spanish military's hopes of obtaining a NATO command. Spain's position has ironically worked to NATO's benefit -- it has simplified an arrangement that allows her



**Figure 8: Spain and NATO**

to make a contribution to NATO without rearranging politically sensitive command structures.

In January 1988 Spain proposed six contributions that it could provide to NATO. The six proposals were taken from the mission requirements outlined in the PEC and based on the central premise that Spain's greatest contribution to collective defense lay in securing its own area of national interest. This argument would make extensive cooperation with NATO more defensible politically.

NATO accepted the Spanish proposal and after extensive consultations, settled the Spanish contribution in the following six missions:

1. Defense and security of Spanish territory;
2. defense and control of Spanish air space;
3. control of the Strait of Gibraltar and its approaches;
4. defense of the East Atlantic by means of naval and air operations;
5. defense of the Western Mediterranean;
6. use of Spanish territory as a transit and logistic support area for U.S. reinforcements.<sup>34</sup>

The exact coordination and implementation agreements were only finally completed in the summer of 1990. Essentially, coordination of Spain's missions with the other commands will be done through the southern command of the Alliance, AFSOUTH, located in Naples, Italy (although, of course, Spain would not be officially under it). This cumbersome communication channel was done to placate Spain's insistence on not dealing with the British; informal communication and coordination between IBERLANT and Spain have not posed a problem.

Harmonizing Spain's contribution has been eased by the willingness to coordinate her war plans and military activities through the DPC. Spain has also

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<sup>34</sup>Jaime de Ojeda, "Spain's Military Role within the NATO Alliance," interview by René Luria, *International Defense Review* 21 (July 1988): 772.



recognized the possibility of temporarily transferring operational control (although not command) of some of her forces to NATO, if they are to be used in Spain's area of strategic interest and if the final decision on their use is taken by the Spanish government alone.<sup>35</sup> In return, Spain has been promised operational control of Allied forces, during peacetime maneuvers and in war for operations in the eastern Atlantic.<sup>36</sup> Spain has also accepted the need to integrate her valuable "Combat Grande" air-warning network into NATO's NADGE system (both were designed by the Hughes company and are very compatible).

Planners in SHAPE are therefore confident that they can coordinate sufficiently with the Spanish Armed Forces to make sure that in a crisis, Spanish forces can contribute to the battle. In reality, most analysts believe that in a crisis, attachment to a unified NATO command probably would be automatic, even if it is not now in writing or publicly acknowledged. Many NATO analysts are however skeptical that Spain can carry out the few tasks it has chosen for itself. Spain's naval, air and ground forces are quantitatively insufficient to control the vast area of her "strategic axis," and despite the considerable reforms and the ambitious modernization program, the Spanish Armed Forces, particularly the Army, are qualitatively still behind their northern neighbors. Still, NATO is keenly interested

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<sup>35</sup>Juan Muñoz Escribano, "Spain's New Joint Strategic Plan: Larger Commitment to the Atlantic Alliance," *Armed Forces Journal International* 125 (May 1988): 26.

<sup>36</sup>This decision by NATO was subsequently modified allowing member nations to have the ultimate say in what cases troops will be under Spanish control. Portugal finds the subordination of Portuguese forces to the Spanish intolerable and fears Spain's intentions to gain control over IBERLANT. *FBIS*, 28 June 1990, 8.

in Spain's newly acquired Wing of F-18 aircraft and especially the newly created Naval Battle group, containing the recently commissioned *Príncipe de Asturias* aircraft carrier and the four new anti-submarine frigates.

Above and beyond the capabilities of the Spanish Armed Forces, the most valuable asset Spain can offer NATO is her territory. In the event of a conflict in Europe (however unlikely it is becoming), the strategic depth and position of the Iberian Peninsula will be crucial. Spain will serve as a strategic redoubt and as a receiving and logistical point for reinforcements coming from North America. This role is not limited to a Central European contingency. With the growing possibility of action along the southern periphery, Spain has already demonstrated her value in this capacity. U.S. forces heading to the Persian Gulf have been allowed to refuel and resupply in Spain. This decision marked the first time Spain willingly cooperated with the United States in military activities connected with the Middle East, and aptly demonstrated her growing commitment to her European and Atlantic responsibilities.

Whereas Spain's role in NATO remains a politically sensitive topic, the Socialists are well aware that participation in strictly European defense endeavors is more politically acceptable at home, and can even be used to mask NATO related activities. The PSOE has always been, as elucidated in González's "decalog," keenly interested in expanding her defense cooperation with other European countries on both a bi-lateral and a multi-lateral basis. Since Spain's accession to the European Community, the González government has been a

consistent "maximalist," championing greater economic and political union, and a stronger European identity in international affairs. Similarly, because of the historic and political difficulties of the American connection, González has been a consistent supporter, almost advocate, of strengthening the "European pillar" of the Alliance, and perhaps even transcending it. Spain has clearly suggested that she would rather associate with a European defense entity than with NATO, and this sentiment has not been limited to the Socialists. The former UCD Foreign Minister, Pérez-Llorca, said that Spain preferred a purely European defense arrangement "and would fight for it, but that is not possible now."<sup>37</sup> Such an association would avoid the "U.S. domination" that many Spaniards link with the NATO command structure, and still realize many of the benefits of military cooperation with her neighbors. Spain is also convinced that any discussion of European Union must address security concerns. As the Defense Minister Narcís Serra, stated,

any political blueprint for building Europe will have to take into account the need for a security dimension, even if this process proceeds with difficulties and problems of dialogue with the Americans.<sup>38</sup>

These thoughts were echoed by the Foreign Minister, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, when he declared that Spain sought membership in the WEU because,

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<sup>37</sup>Gregory Treverton, "Spain: Domestic Politics and Security Policy," 32

<sup>38</sup>*FBIS*, 31 March 1988, 14.

the organization recognized that "the construction of Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defense."<sup>39</sup>

As early as 1984, González in the "decalog" had outlined the government's interest in joining the WEU, but first the unresolved status in NATO, and then the anti-nuclear stance remained as obstacles to accession. Since 1977, and reinforced by the 1986 Referendum, Spain prohibits the introduction of nuclear weapons on her soil, while the WEU is a strong advocate of the nuclear deterrent. A compromise was eventually worked out when the government unconditionally accepted the main tenets of the WEU, such as nuclear deterrence and the principle of solidarity (which requires the sending one's forces outside national territories to assist a WEU member under attack). In return, the other WEU countries placed no demand on Spain to accept nuclear weapons on her soil. The principle of solidarity conflicts directly with the Socialist government's assertions that Spain would not dispatch forces outside of her area of strategic interest. Membership in the WEU appears then as a convenient way to circumvent domestic politically imposed restrictions on NATO participation. Since as a member of the WEU, Spain's armed forces automatically come under the control of NATO's SHAPE.

For the same purpose, the González government has been particularly eager to participate in non-NATO defense arrangements, since it does not violate

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<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 331.

the conditions of the 1986 referendum. So far co-operation agreements have been concluded with France and Italy for more effective control of the Western Mediterranean. Spain also regularly conducts joint military training exercises with her European allies. The creation of an all service 20,000 man Rapid deployment Force, *Fuerza de Intervención Rápida*, (FIR) to be manned exclusively by volunteers (to avoid the political difficulties of committing drafted soldiers abroad) was announced in 1988, ostensibly to meet the rapid deployment requirements of the PEC. Yet the timing of the announcement during discussions over Spain's possible participation in the WEU was seen by political observers as a clear signal of Spain's firm commitment to the Alliance, and it appeared to play a decisive role in Spain's admission to the WEU.<sup>40</sup> The Socialists were also keenly interested in participating in the Franco-German Brigade and its joint defense council, but France politely declined González's offer.<sup>41</sup>

Most recently, Spain has endorsed the proposal outlined by the Secretary General of the WEU, Willem van Eekelen. Van Eekelen envisions a considerable expansion in the functions of the WEU. He has proposed a role for the WEU in arms control verification, and more ambitiously, as a basis for the construction of

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<sup>40</sup>Philip Scaramanga, "Spain's Rapid Deployment Force," *International Defense Review* 22 (March 1989): 435. In late 1990 it was finally publicly acknowledged that the FIR would also serve to "fulfill the missions necessary for the common defense of the Alliance," preferably in the area of Spain's strategic interest, but leaving open the possibility of intervention outside the zone. Army Chief of Staff, del Moral, quoted in *El País*, 5 November 1990.

<sup>41</sup>*The Economist*, 26 March 1988, 46.

a European supranational army, reminiscent of the 1950s European Defense Community (EDC) concept. He believes the WEU can become the agent for the European Community in defense matters.<sup>42</sup> Such a development would fulfill the Spanish government's defense policy dream, integration into a military structure that would be politically acceptable to the Spanish people, and thus requiring no constraints or conditions.

In sum, although domestic political concerns in the form of referendum stipulations have made a decisive impact on Spain's role in NATO, it has not prevented the PSOE government from participating heavily in the European defense structure. If anything, the domestic pressures have only forced the government to become more imaginative in the form and method of participation.

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<sup>42</sup>*El País*, 6 April 1990.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusions**

This thesis has attempted to pursue several themes, many of them interrelated, evident in the formulation of the current Socialist government's defense policy. Among them are: the remarkable degree of continuity in policy between the different regimes; the need to depoliticize the military; the commitment to make Spain again a major player in European affairs; and the necessity of reestablishing a domestic consensus on Spain's direction in foreign and defense policy areas. All can ultimately be summed up in one statement -- the primacy of domestic politics in Spanish defense policy. Domestic politics, of course, plays a role in every nation's foreign and defense policies. How a nation views the outside world and any foreign threats is as much a factor of a nation's history, societal values, and political culture, as it is of any objective threat analysis, but in Spain special circumstances have pushed domestic politics to the forefront. As a result, legitimate defense requirements have often been sacrificed for political or economic expediency.

Much of the situation is derived from the lack of any clear external danger. Spain has not faced an external challenge since the Napoleonic Wars. Instead, geographic isolation, internal weakness, and a civil war culminating in the Franco regime's isolation, steadily marginalized Spain's role in Europe and forced her to remain neutral during the major conflicts of this century. Consequently, most

Spaniards have little sense of cross-border threats and if anything, given the military historic preoccupation with internal affairs, remain distrustful of their military's intentions. The southern threat to the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are real, but only in the sense that they remain anomalies in the twentieth century, not that any action against them would represent a peril to the mainland. The Canary Islands have seen violence, but only in the form of separatists that may have been seeking external aid, not external aggression.

Franco did not seem to take external threats seriously, for he intentionally (and ironically, since they constituted his main pillar of support) kept the military feeble and backward. His only effective units were deployed far from the frontiers and close to the major population centers to ensure domestic tranquility. He was well aware of the military's acquired interventionist taste in politics, and was perhaps determined to control them by offering them prestigious positions in the government and the bureaucracy while keeping their capabilities weak and limited. His defense policy was exclusively oriented towards domestic politics, i.e., keeping himself in power. Even the 1953 bases accords with the U.S., which tied Spain for the first time within the Western defense structure, was not done out of any strategic or defense requirement, but out of the need to gain international recognition and economic assistance during a period of acute economic crisis.

The close connection of politics and defense policy continued after Franco's death, as the UCD government struggled to dismantle the Francoist structure and to convert the military to loyal supporters of the new Constitution.



As mentioned in Chapter One, the UCD attempted to pursue a conciliatory line towards the armed forces to secure their support in the democratic transition, but the UCD failed to convince the military's more intransigent elements. The resulting coup of the 23rd of February was the final act needed to persuade the UCD leadership of the necessity of NATO membership and more ardent military reform. NATO was seen as the key to unlock EEC membership, as a way of drawing Spain closer to the Western democracies, and as the urgent medicine necessary to facilitate the professional-ization and depoliticization of the armed forces. But whereas Franco's decision to tie Spain to the West defensively could be done with impunity, in the new democratic framework, the NATO decision, given Spain's historical neutrality, was bound to illicit great opposition. The NATO decision, in effect, destroyed the domestic consensus on policy that the Suárez government had endeavored to nurture in order to hold the new democracy together during its first years. Moreover, since the decision to enter NATO was not done out of strategic necessity, but for political reasons, it would be in the political arena where it would be fought out.

Felipe González's opposition to NATO and his call for a referendum reflected his party's traditional stance and electoral convenience. After reaching office, however, he was still faced with many of the same challenges that had confronted his predecessors. As his Defense Minister aptly pointed out, leaving NATO was not the same as entering it. González realized that his major policy objectives would be jeopardized by leaving the Alliance. First, having been elected

on a day discovered to be targeted for a coup, showed that the military remained a real threat to the democracy; it needed to be firmly subordinated to the civilian government and given a viable external defense mission, and the tools to accomplish it. NATO could not guarantee the military's nonintervention in the political order, but it could assist in it. Second, González was a deeply committed "Europeanist." As a university student in Louvain in the 1960s, he once described how many bars in Belgium had announcements, "no entry for Spaniards, Africans, and North Africans." He further relates:

The railway stations are packed with Spaniards who spend hour upon hour in a state of disorientation. They're not shown the slightest consideration and are in the saddest human and spiritual misery.<sup>1</sup>

This experience would have enormous impact on his outlook, and his actions and goals do have an underlying consistency that often belies the rhetoric: to transform Spain into a modern European nation: economically, politically, socially, and militarily. Toward this end, he grasped the usefulness of NATO membership in not only securing EEC membership, but in facilitating closer cooperation and even integration with his West European neighbors, particularly in the economic realm. NATO offered unique opportunities through its various organs, to not only assist in modernizing the Spanish armed forces, but to also modernize the industrial defense sector that supplied it. Spain, especially with entry into the EEC, needed to create an industrial sector that could compete with its European

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Camiller, "Spanish Socialism in the Atlantic Order," 7.

partners, and that could ensure employment and growth in the years ahead. It is for this reason that Spain has thrown itself wholeheartedly into NATO and European research projects, even though it can be argued that such funds could be better utilized in other fields. Regardless, the underlying objective is clear and firmly rooted in the domestic environment: to bring the structures of the Spanish state in line with the models prevalent in the other European democracies.

González's change of heart, however, was complicated by not only popular opposition to NATO membership but by differences of view between his government and his party. González was thus faced with the challenge of fashioning a foreign and defense policy that made sense in view of Spain's international position and his "Europeanist" goals, but that also could command tolerable party and public support. The mechanism for reconstructing this consensus was the NATO referendum. González won the Referendum, but it was largely realized through party and personal loyalties, not through any real change in conviction among the party or the electorate. Therefore, the conclusion of the NATO Referendum did not end the debate on Spain's role in Western defense, it only shifted it to ensuring the government's fulfillment of the Referendum conditions.

The scheduled 1988 U.S. Bases Treaty renewal provided a convenient forum for the PSOE government to fulfill at least one of the stipulations of the NATO referendum, despite its potentially detrimental effect to NATO's defenses and Spain's relations with the NATO members. Only Italy's willingness to take the

F-16 Wing and the understanding of the European NATO members prevented any real damage to NATO or Spain's relations with her Alliance neighbors. Nevertheless, the domestic political need to secure a major and visible reduction in the U.S. forces was deemed worth the potential costs abroad.

A more difficult task has been reconciling the Referendum's stipulation on NATO participation. It clashes head on with the PSOE's goal of maximizing Spanish involvement in European affairs. The government has resolved this dilemma by slyly taking a very narrow interpretation of the term "integrated military structure." This, combined with the inherent flexibility of the NATO organization, has allowed Spain to participate in most of NATO's activities and councils, and has allowed access to what Spain desires most -- participation in NATO's cooperative weapons research and development projects, and a voice in NATO's political deliberations.

The Socialist's commitment to European defense has never been really in doubt and it has been confirmed by her strong support for, and participation in, the West European Union. The PSOE government has also eagerly pursued bilateral defense cooperation agreements with its European neighbors. Though all these arrangements can be linked to NATO, they have provided a method of Spanish participation in European defense that is much more politically acceptable at home.

Throughout the PSOE government's tenure in office defense policy has had to be amended or directed to suit domestic political requirements. From a strictly

military point of view this has entailed costs. The NATO Referendum stipulations lost the Spanish military's opportunity to obtain a NATO command; the new U.S. bases agreement forced out a valuable wing of aircraft; the government's expenditures on high technology weapons projects has meant a slower pace in the armed forces' modernization program; the reduction in the military service period to nine months will mean less trained soldiers and consequently lower unit readiness; and finally the government's resistance to a strictly volunteer force will leave doubt to the qualities and abilities of the Spanish armed forces, especially in the Army.

This last point must be emphasized. The PSOE's need to amend their defense policies to meet political realities does not mean that the government has changed its policy merely to gain popularity. The government's stance on NATO, the nuclear compromise with the U.S. and the WEU, and the insistence on retaining the "*mili*," were all unpopular decisions. The González government, as this thesis has tried to point out, has maintained throughout its tenure clear cut goals in defense policy. Domestic political concerns has forced Felipe González to define positions that can secure at least a tolerable measure of support while still retaining his primary objectives. The real source then of Spain's often contradictory and ambiguous conduct towards NATO and Western defence is in the tensions caused by the differing goals of the governing elite and the sentiments of the majority of Spaniards, both inside and outside the political arena. For the González's government main objective has never faltered -- to bring Spain into the mainstream of Europe, economically, politically, socially, and militarily.

This central objective in Socialist policy was most recently reiterated by the government's decision to dispatch three warships to the Persian Gulf. Felipe González readily admitted that the initiative was based on the need to "bring Spain out of its isolation."<sup>2</sup> The González government has never wavered in this aspiration and has proven resolute in achieving its purpose -- even if it had to persuade, compromise, cajole, trick, or drag the rest of Spain with it.

### **Issues For the Future**

The events of 1989 will have enormous implications for Spanish defense policy as it will in every other NATO country. The dramatic lessening of East-West tensions, NATO's increased emphasis on its political role over its military function, Spain's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations, and Spain's growing role and importance in Europe, all are likely to increase popular acceptance of NATO. The government's willingness to allow U.S. forces heading for the Persian Gulf to refuel and resupply on Spanish territory and the subsequent dispatch of three warships to the Persian Gulf to support the United Nations' embargo is evidence of, at least, the government's growing commitment to stand with its European allies.

The decision nevertheless reawakened the same latent sentiments that had first generated the NATO controversy and that now add fuel to the growing debate over the draft. The youth organizations, including the Socialist's own, were

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<sup>2</sup>*El País*, 20 November 1990.

particularly missed that more than half of the nearly 500 sailors being sent to the Gulf are completing their mandatory one year of military service. As Spain's involvement in European security measures increases, and as East-West tensions disappear, the argument over the wisdom of abandoning conscription for an all volunteer force will undoubtedly intensify.

The events of 1989 have changed the basic assumptions of the PEC, forcing the government to redraw the plan. The Defense Ministry has already stated its intention to pursue a further reduction in forces. It will be accompanied with an increased emphasis on greater efficiency and professionalization, better personnel management, an increase in the number of volunteers, the reduction in compulsory service to nine months, and the acceleration of equipment modernization. The González government still refuses, however, to consider the concept of a strictly volunteer force, despite studies indicating that defense costs, depending on the force structure (all envision a reduction in size) would only rise minimally or even decrease. Critics argue that even if defense expenditures rise, a volunteer force would still be a better return on the investment. It would save society the hidden "conscription taxes" caused by the income lost that would have been generated if the recruit had continued in civilian life, or the money that families usually send their sons for expenses during their period of service. The government remains adamant that military service imbues youth with civic responsibility and maintains that crucial link between the military and the society.

Therefore, it is still unclear how the Spanish defense structure will ultimately be affected by the new international realities. The Spanish government is concerned by the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in North Africa, most recently demonstrated by the Islamic Salvation Front's strength in the Algerian provincial and municipal elections of June 1990. It has given an added spark to an old Spanish desire for some kind of Mediterranean security arrangement. Spain has lately renewed its diplomatic efforts, in collaboration with Italy, for the creation of a forum similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) for the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> For the government is well aware, as the poll in Chapter Three demonstrated, that the majority of Spaniards are unwilling to go to war for the sake of Ceuta and Melilla, and more recent surveys even indicate popular willingness to trade possession of the two enclaves for Gibraltar. These polls combined with the growing resistance to the draft and the reduction or even disappearance of the Soviet threat, suggests that the Spanish force structure will have to be substantially adjusted in the near future. If the force structures changes presently contemplated by Spain and the other European countries are any indication, the Spanish armed forces of the future will be smaller in size, lighter, more mobile and flexible, better equipped, and more professional. But if this study is of use, it is to remind one that regardless of the final outcome, Spanish defense arrangements will be determined less by military considerations than by the domestic political context.

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<sup>3</sup>*El País (Panorama Semanal)*, 7 May 1990.



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## **VITA**

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**Academic Information:**

B.S.F.S. (Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service) from the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1982;

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**Professional Information:** Captain, Infantry, U.S. Army.

**Graduate of:**

Infantry Officer's Basic and Advance Courses;

U.S. Army's Airborne, Air Assault, Pathfinder, and Ranger Courses;

U.S. Air Force's Air-Ground Operations School;

Joint Electronic Warfare Staff Officer's Course.

**Assignments:**

Platoon Leader, Executive Officer, and S-3 Air for the 2nd Battalion 6th Infantry, Erlangen, Germany 1982-1986;

Operations Officer and Aide-de-Camp for the Commanding General, U.S. Army South, Republic of Panama 1986-1988;

S-3 Air and Company Commander for the 5th Battalion 87th Infantry Republic of Panama 1988-89.

**Awards and Decorations:**

Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon (second award);

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